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BAPTISTS IN THE BUILDING of THE NATION

R. F. RILEY

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The Baptists in the Building of the Nation

A Narrative of the Chief Contributions made by the Baptists to the Erection of Our Democracy and to the Promotion of its Development

BY

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"History of the Baptists of Alabama," "History of the Baptists of the Southern States East of the Mississippi," "History of the Baptists of Texas," etc.

"Our humanity were a poor thing but for the divinity that stirs within us."

—*Bacon*

✠

"Humanity is a duty made known and enjoined by revelation, and ever keeping pace with the progress of Christianity."

—*Sydney Smith*

✠

"A liberty, which persecution, fraud,
Oppression, prisons, have no power to bind;
Which whoso tastes can be enslaved no more:
'Tis liberty of heart, derived from Heaven,
Bought with *His* blood, who gave it to mankind,
And sealed it with the same token. It is held
By charter, and that charter sanctioned sure
By the unimpeachable and awful oath
And promise of a God."

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FOREWORD

In this little volume emphasis is given to certain facts and transactions which, through indifference or oversight, have never had the embodied distinction justified by their merits. The facts themselves are not newly-discovered, for they have long lain scattered throughout our secular and ecclesiastical histories, but they have never been placed in coherent order and in correlated shape.

As here presented, they show the important part played by Baptists in the erection of the American Democracy. With the early peopling of our shores there came into contention four forms of church government—the Papal, Episcopal, Theocratic, and Democratic. In different parts of the continent, notably in the far west, and later in Florida, Maryland, and Louisiana, Papacy sought a foothold, but it was a system unsuited to the genius of a people many of whom had come to the New World to escape European Romanism, hence in the current of the struggle which attended the colonial population of America, Rome did not so much share. The struggle, however, deeply involved the other three forms of church government, with results briefly traced in these pages.

In the expression of opposition to Democracy, both the Episcopacy and the Theocracy were equally stout. The fact is that the Episcopacy was inclusive of the Theocracy, the latter assuming its peculiar form in expression of its nonconformity, while coinciding with the former in a common sentiment of hostility against

Democracy. John Cotton, known as "the father and glory of Boston" and recognized as one of the mildest of the earliest of the theocratic leaders, voiced his sentiment against Democracy in this way:

"Democracy I do not conceive that ever did God ordain as a fit government either for Church or Commonwealth. If the people be governors, who shall be governed? As for monarchy and aristocracy, they are both of them clearly approved and directed in Scripture, yet so as refereth the sovereignty to himself and setteth up theocracy in both as the best form of government in the Commonwealth as well as in the Church."

In thorough accord concerning Democracy, both the other forms were arrayed against it, and both sought to strangle it in its infancy by the employment of civil force, but the Democracy strangely throve by means of the very agencies vigorously invoked to stamp it out.

Other agencies tributary to human freedom were meanwhile moving apace, among which may be named the wider dissemination of knowledge through the printing press, and especially the translation of the Bible into the popular vernacular. Philosophy was making its contribution, and men were thinking as never before. These movements were entirely congenial to the religious sense of liberty which gripped the moral vitality of men, and in the combination of all these was the beginning of our national Democracy. Thought, sentiment, and the deeper power of religion in the soul yielded the harvest of democratic principles which came to enter into our American government.

Among these elements spiritual liberty was the

strongest and the most pronounced. In its comprehension it embraced all that was best in sentiment, aspiration, and thought, and was therefore the foremost factor in the development of human freedom. In this relation we discover the influence and work of the people called Baptists. Their sense of liberty, their ideals and inspirations showed the way to freedom and gave moral cast to the institutions which grew up in response to the demand for an orbit in which freedom might move unhindered in the constant promotion of human good, and in the development of a high type of manhood.

Liberty was irrepressible. It came from the conscience and the heart derived from the word of God. Though sought to be strangled, it survived and turned to the greatest practical account even the effort made to repress it. Though originally much the feeblest in aspect among the initial forces that swayed colonial life, liberty worked its way through a tortuous process to ascendancy. Appropriating all that was best in the incoming tributaries from what may be called the secular side, and assimulating them with itself, freedom rose by degrees to immense proportions and sought expression in laws and institutions which make for the common good.

In the following chapters the effort is made to show, not only who were the pioneers of this spiritual and secular liberty in America, but who were the pronounced promoters of the principle as it has come to stratify our national life throughout.

INTRODUCTION

J. B. GAMBRELL, D. D.

President of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The author of "The Baptists in the Building of the Nation" is well known as a writer on many subjects. He has given large attention to Baptist history. This volume will prove of very special interest to a wide circle of readers. It is very much more than a narrative of facts. It carries in it and with it the real spirit and philosophy of a movement very romantic and thrilling. More still, there arise from the pages of this book, lessons of the deepest meaning. The author does well when he ascribes to a divine providence the co-ordination of separate happenings, and the final success of the labors of the simple but sound-hearted people called Baptists. These people were unschooled. They had no far-off visions of a nation, puissant, powerful, founded on the bed-rock principles they loved, suffered for, and were ready to die for at the call of duty. They interpreted their duty in the light of God's holy word, which lighted the rugged path they willingly walked in. Nothing moved them. They could hear but one voice and it came from above: "This is the way, walk ye on it."

One outstanding lesson springing from this narrative is the invincibility of truth upheld by men of conscience and faith in God. These early Baptists, poor, unlettered, and few in number, apprehend a spiritual truth which lies at the very base of Christianity. The wise and prudent did not see it. The Baptist people

held it through thick and thin. Popes, prelates of both high and low degrees, preachers and politicians wore out all their hammers on the anvil of the Baptist conscience, and the anvil got better all the time. This world belongs to truth. The honest mind, unbiased, was made for truth and "Truth crushed to earth will rise again, the eternal years of God are her's." But somebody must believe the truth and uphold it. That is what Baptists did in America. Because they did, America is free and America is today enilghtening the world.

Another lesson is spelled large in this book, as the author groups and properly relates the unquestioned historic facts touching the long and tragic struggle for full and equal religious liberty for all on American soil. The common people bore the brunt of the battle and won the battle. Great movements for human betterment have always had their main strength in the hearts of the common people. The common people heard Jesus gladly. The hearts of the unspoiled masses have been the good ground from which the best harvests have been gathered. For one thing, there are more of them, and they are less artificial than the rich and great. Baptists of today will do well to make a note of this important fact and work down close to the ground where the common people live. When God wants to grow a great tree he plants it in the ground and it grows upward. Hot houses do not grow big trees.

It is very pleasing that Dr. Riley nowhere in this very illuminating volume gives any extravagant praise to the Baptists who won the most valuable victory, both religious and civil, in modern times. They were

very plain, ordinary people—sincere and courageous. They were gripped by a dominating principle. They knew in their hearts it was of God. They were a devout people, and they could do nothing but hold on and go on. Who can estimate the corrective, constructive, inspiring force of a great spiritual truth fixed in the hearts of a simple-minded devout people, whose chief aim in life is to please God and who care little what the world thinks of them. John Wesley said "Give me one hundred men who love God and care for nothing but to please Him, and I will change the world." Many less than a hundred Baptists led by Dr. John Clark and Roger Williams committed themselves to the task of pleasing God in the matter of soul liberty, and the world has been marvelously changed. In the midst of hierarchs and classes and age-long prejudices and spiritual blindness, they saw the root principle of modern civilization. In the moral dignity of the soul God has made all men equal and all should be free. Their devotion and suffering infected the public mind. They had few able advocates—for long periods none—but their lives and suffering were eloquent. Madison spoke of their persecutors as "imps of the devil." Intelligent and humane men could not help being influenced in the right direction. Gladstone said: "One example is worth a thousand arguments." Demonstrations always supersede arguments with sensible people. The early Baptists in America set up a demonstration of freedom with order, which won the favor of the most enlightened statesmen of the colonies. It became a vital and dominating element in the thinking of the people, worked its way up like the sap in the tree and hardened into the tough, fine timber of

the American Commonwealth, which, in the Providence of God, has come to the first place in the sisterhood of nations, and is destined to lead the world the upward way to a higher civilization, resting on the sure foundation of freedom limited by laws, equal and just to all.

The story is romantic, entrancing, instructive and highly encouraging to those who believe in God and the right. It is well told. It carries in it a fine tonic for flabby souls, and points the way for the subduing of the whole world to the peaceable rule of Christ. "The Baptists in the Building of the Nation" ought to be widely circulated. The times in which we are call loudly for it.

THE BAPTISTS IN THE BUILDING OF THE NATION

I

A General Background

Of the nature of the novel government set up by Christ there can be but one conclusion. Great conquerors had preceded him, and by feat of arms had wrought prodigies in the subjugation of nations to their individual sway, and by awe and terror, the nations thus subdued, were held in submission to the wills of the conquerors. Force was the dominant element in the world, and fear the condition produced by means of which conquerors domineered, and sovereigns reigned. No other method had before been known, no other conceived or thought of. These conquerors had hailed from the ruling class, from royal palaces and from thrones of dominion. For centuries this rule had prevailed till it was recognized as the natural order. The common people were thought of as nothing more than as machines, through the toil of whom thrones were upheld, palaces maintained, and the aristocratic class was enabled to luxuriate. The state was supreme, the people were only herds employed for its sustenance. Ripening through ages, this had come to be thought of as the normality of existence.

At the acme of this condition, a young man appeared on the scene, not from the circles of royalty, but from the ranks of the laboring peasantry. His birth-place

was the stall of an ox, his mother was a maiden from the base of the pyramid of society, his rearing was in the atmosphere of the shop of a carpenter, his social surroundings the humblest, his home in the Galilean hills, his associations the lowliest in the scale of society.

In the flush of young manhood, he began a propaganda which, in comparison with prevailing conditions, seemed not only fanciful but to the highest degree fanatical. At first, he excited but slight notice, save among the unlettered masses, where emotion and passion are most easily roused, and where stable thought is least expected. The effervescent crowd, like the cloud, is liable to every sort of shape and expression, an hour later the opposite of that which it was the hour before.

While this young Nazarene was artlessly and unostentatiously instilling his supposed visionary views into the minds of the common mass, Caesar was serene in his palace, for the time undisturbed, and really unaffected by that which was taking place. His armies were quartered in different parts of the world, and his word was law. This represented the physical prowess of the world, as the proclamations of the Roman throne were sustained by a veteran soldiery.

The main seat of the world's thought was at Athens where Sophists were still raising questions of abstraction which the world ever since has been seeking to answer. To discover something new in thought, and to stir mental activity by some novel proposition or problem, was the serious concern of the Athenian school of philosophy.

This newness of thought was already issuing from an unconjectured source, and it was of a nature so simple, that it could not have stirred a ripple on the surface of Athenian thought, nor have excited philosophic serenity, while its initial demonstration as concerned forcefulness, would not have elicited so much as a concessive sneer either at Rome or Athens.

Had it been possible, at the time, to telegraph or telephone to Athens and Rome on the occasion of the delivery of the Sermon on the Mount, that which the young reformer from the hills was proclaiming, it might have elicited nothing more than disdainful pity for a poor, deluded young Jew, who deserved nothing more than a transient contempt. Yet there were embodied in that simple discourse elements dynamic of dynasties and at the same time conducive to a fresh type of manhood for the world.

Here was beginning a process more than merely revolutionary, it was reversive. Here was commencing a campaign of the ages, the object of which was nothing less than that of turning the world upside down. There was being placed in the current of the world's thought, a rock, not only in arrest of its flow, but one which would turn the current upstream. It was literally the signal of an era when old things were to pass away, and all things were to become new.

The passive virtues long buried, and no longer thought of among men, were raised to new life, and were to supplant in dominance those bristling with force and controlled by fear. Classism was to be swept aside and thrown on the junk pile of the obsolete. The high state was to be overset, and the low individual

raised on high. Force in the control of men physically and in soul-life was to be subverted from its lordly function, and simple suasion substituted instead. Fear by means of which provinces and dominions were held in subject, was to be displaced by love. It was an era of opposites. Antipodal conditions were to be everywhere introduced, fathoming humanity to the lowest point, and about-facing all things. The world all-wrong, was to be made the world all-right.

Nothing less serious than this was the undertaking of this young man from Nazareth. His social position and prestige suggested the reversal—a man of the common people encountering the crowned heads and armed forces of the world. Individuality as a crowning feature of the new movement, was emphasized and symbolized by the fact that, single-handed, he assumed the tremendous venture.

But most astounding of all was the announcement of this unschooled young man from notorious Nazareth, that he would establish an empire that would be inclusive of all nations and races, kindreds and tribes, without special regard to one more than to another, and while in the world, this empire was not to be of the world. Stranger still, it was to be an empire of heart and of character rather than of geographical provinces, divided into heptarchies, oligarchies, satrapies, and hierarchies. It was to be an invisible kingdom, upheld not by lust of power, but by loyalty of love.

That of which Rome had dreamed in the successful carriage of her eagles through the ancient Gallic provinces and into the British isles far westward, com-

ing into the control of the world, then known, was to disintegrate under the mystic power of an empire without arms. That for which philosophic Greece yearned in a quest for "some new thing," was already present in the world. With the quietness of the morning, a new province of thought had been opened. Just as noiselessly, a new sphere of activity had been disclosed. A new impulse to achieve had been introduced. A new estimate of humanity had been established. All things had become new.

But to all this was added an element of support, quite as novel, if not more so, as any already named. To project the enterprise of a world-empire would have been the absurdest of dreams, if it had been left to a mere declaration. Government must have support. In an undertaking so bold as that projected by Jesus, there must be means of sustenance. By exacting taxation, wrung from the people in their poverty, governments had often prosecuted wars. Like other Governments, this must rely on efficient and loyal supporters, without which any government would be meaningless. Just as novel as all else, in this new movement, was the reliance of Jesus on individual voluntariness. He drafted no one, used not the least compulsion, but counted on men and women who were willing to give their lives for him. Subjection? Yes, but a subjection in which were involved individuality, voluntariness, personal choice, and personal faith. In this way, subjection to Christ became freedom.

But in view of the overwhelming physical forces at the command of conquerors and monarchs, might not this loyalty be intercepted and coerced into compliance

to the great powers? Not when men and women were armed with an inner force that was at once invincible and indestructible. This new force was also divinely vitalized. Once implanted, it could no more be blotted out or eradicated than one can snuff out the sun. It lay altogether beyond the reach of physical implements of torture and death.

What was this wonderful quality? Faith. But had not faith before existed? Yes, it is a quality that is inherent in every one, but now it is magnified in strength such as it never before had. So augmented was this inner force that it became practically a new creation. Charged with this new gift, disaster was met undismayed. Under its sway no labor was counted too great to be attempted, no sacrifice was esteemed too great to be made. Faith by the prodigy of its nature and by the possibility of its achievement, became a new word in the world's vocabulary. No word corresponding with the idea, as it was expressed in the deed of that time, was in either the Greek or Roman language. The original term was touched by the gospel into a new significance and a new potency never before known to men. Nor again did faith stand alone either in proportion or in efficacy of achievement. Behind it, and in inseparable connection with it was love, endowed with the same inextinguishable life. Neither was of course visible as a target for the aim of the oppressor or the persecutor. Displayed as these forces were, they won sympathy, when persecution fell on their possessors, roused interest, and served to awaken it in others. Thus incarnated and multiplied as these soul-forces were, there came another reversal

of the general order of things—defeat was turned into victory. Persecution is its own vanquisher. A worthy cause prospers in proportion to its persecution. There is that within men which responds to that to which the meritorious are subjected. Not a few causes are indebted to that which they have endured. When once on the high tableland of success, won through stress of storm and struggle, fagot, and sword, a cause becomes doubly valiant, and is correspondingly prized.

Faith and love with their sister, hope, sank themselves in everlasting rootage in the natures of men and women, in the early days of Christianity, for the perpetual welfare of the race. In their transcendent stoutness, they were never to pass from the earth. Not even the gates of hell should prevail against them. To the end of time, they were to flourish among men, both benignantly and aggressively. Meek in spirit, yet courageous in virtue, this triad of divine graces was to march down the centuries with conquering tread, overcoming even in disaster, resplendent in deepest darkness, rejoicing in tribulation.

There was no flaw in the government fashioned by the divine Founder. He said "My kingdom is not of this world," hence it formed no alliances, entered on no treaties, created no pacts, exacted no indemnities, imposed no tributes, formed no compromises. No naturalization document was needed to become a citizen of this spiritual commonwealth. The sole condition was embodied in just two words—"Only believe." An invisible kingdom, the condition was also an invisible factor. Invisible as the kingdom was, Rome, long a

blusterer, and grown arrogant by its prowess of arms, dissolved under its hidden power and sank in a common crash of ruin.

In the adventurer, Constantine, we find the world's first great demagogue which is only another way of saying that he was a prodigious hypocrite. Of the craftiness of this man but little needs to be said, but in his shrewdness he paid tribute to Christianity, not because of love or loyalty, but because he saw how powerful a party the Christians had become, and so beguiling them by a fake profession of faith, he lured them to trouble. While Constantine's motive was one purely selfish, yet on the obverse side of the transaction is seen the power to which Christianity had attained in the Roman world, and the footing which an astute politician was willing to accord it.

Here came an adverse turn in the tide of affairs. Church and state were merged in the introduction of an issue that was to extend with attendant blood and horror, far into the future ages. It is obviously out of the question to follow this struggle in any other than in the most general way. It is sufficient alone to say that there was an issue raised in the repeated assertion of the divine right, not of kings, but of the kingdom of heaven.

Had it been possible to quench in death the life of the church of Jesus Christ, it would have been done during the Middle Ages. Turning the same question about, it may be said that since the essence of Christianity could not be smothered by the flummery of the Dark Ages, when every enginery known to the machinations of men was enlisted in its extinction, it is safe,

not only, but its perpetuity is established by reason of its indestructibility. Like the peaks of mountains rising from a world of fog, the facts of the aggressive movements against "The Church," lift themselves along the centuries of the Dark Ages.

Sporadic movements against an impious institution called "The Church," rose and went, and though these movements were inoculated with the poison of the mother system, from which they came, they yet retained a modicum of the original virility once imparted, and sufficiently to give evidence of the fact that spiritual liberty was not extinct. Whatever may be said of these divers movements, called by different names in church history, though sometimes expressing themselves fanatically and even frantically, there is discerned within them the spirit of religious freedom. They were protests in behalf of individual liberty, responsibility to God rather than to men, direct personal approach and appeal to the one Mediator, disunion of church and state, elbow room and breathing-space for conscience and soul.

Neither should the fact be overlooked that, though temporarily suppressed, the spirit embodying the elements already named, rose again and yet again, with ever increasing strength and boldness, and with clearer perception each time of that first taught by the Son of God. This augmented force bore against the hierarchical obstructions raised to stay its progress, till they were finally compelled to give way.

Then came the era of the Reformation. Nor must the fact be overlooked that the Reformation was far from being the work of one man. Around the name

of Martin Luther the fame of the Reformation is grouped, but he could never have successfully moved an inch but for the undertow of popular sentiment running in a strong current in the same direction and with the same objective that he had. Luther was a hero, a virile but defective leader, but the monk of Erfurt would have been powerless but for the support of the common people, who had endured and struggled generations before Luther was born.

When in surprise and joy Luther fell on the old copy of the New Testament in the musty archives at Erfurt, and found on reading it the wide difference between its teachings and those of the hierarchy of which he was a priest, and when beginning to change his manner and method of preaching, by conforming to the model of the New Testament, then came the clash with the Pope, which resulted in the storm-burst of the Reformation. This was the signal for the demonstration of the spirit and strength of the common people. Not only were they ready, but prompt to act. On his way to answer the summons of Charles V., before whom he was to give account of his "new doctrine," he was heartened along the route by the plaudits of the crowds.

It is true that Luther failed the masses at a critical juncture, and espoused the cause of the German princes against them, but the people never flinched in the loyalty of devotion to the cause of which Luther was the leader. Hero and leader as he was, it is not to the credit of Luther that he turned from being the friend of the people to being that of the princes.

Issuing from the stormy contest occasioned by the

Reformation were two distinct classes of religionists. One of these, discolored traditionally by the long-continued sway of Romanism, retained not a little of the stain which has been permanently held in one form or another to this day. The other, a distinct group, standing apart from the party just named insisted on a return of conformity to the mold of New Testament doctrine. Belonging to the first class named, were the great leaders of the Reformation—Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and Melancthon, while not a great outstanding figure connected with the movement was found on the other side, favoring a return to the model of the New Testament—so imbued were these great men by the errors long inculcated by Rome. Certain grave errors had become invested with sacredness, and these had become so deeply engrafted that they were not extracted at a juncture which meant so much to the future of the world. Among others that might be named, were the two grave errors of infant baptism and the union of state and church.

The opportunity afforded by the Reformation was that of a prompt restoration in ascendency of the principles taught by Christ. That opportunity was, in large measure lost, at the time, and with it was lost the logical meaning of the Reformation. Partial adoption was only partial victory, while the errors insistently retained, lent encouragement and stimulation to the impious system against which the reformers had in common battled. The retainment of Romish errors logically led to the retention of the means and measures of Rome of their coerced enforcement. If the false doctrines had been brought over from Rome, so

was the infamous practice of persecution. Hence the force of persecution was invoked on the hither side as it had been on the thither—all of which was at direct variance with the teaching of the New Testament.

Thus as it turned out, the battle had been but half won, and the conflict for soul freedom had to be renewed on this side of the Reformation, now among those who had been common sharers in breaking off the Romish yoke. With this mere incident of the formidable movement, that of throwing off the yoke of the papacy, the chief leaders were mainly content, while the intent of the group representing the notion of full religious freedom, was that of a thorough restoration of original doctrine and practice, as promulgated by Christ.

Here sprang up a new contest for religious liberty. Impelled by the same motive and spirit which had actuated them under Romish sway, these lovers of conscience-freedom were as ready to do, and die if need be, for that inestimable boon. With nothing short of that which Christ had prescribed for the full exercise of the free forces within men for the weal of humanity and the glory of God, would they be content. While that spirit had been displayed, in the transient outbreaks which now and then took place during the Dark Ages, it now assumed a distinct form under those who were stigmatized and persecuted as despised Anabaptists.

Now began in a fresh way, the conflict of the centuries which centered about soul-freedom. God still had his witnesses among men. They were of the common folk, but were not without great leadership, which

was developed by the new crisis. Balthaser Hubmaeir and John Denck are names that must forever be unseparated from the annals of the battles of soul-freedom. Men like these stood as immovable as mountains against the half-way reforms of Luther and his compeers, and because of their conscientious protest and of that of their followers, they were hounded to the death, as had been the reformers before the Reformation. The history of this long and bloody struggle in Europe cannot be further pursued here. It is only enough to say that for centuries it was kept up in Europe, and came to involve much else, in consequence of the pernicious doctrines retained by the Reformation leaders after that they had passed beyond the jurisdiction of the Romish See. State and church became intermixed in a dreadful knot and complication, but God was still guarding the issue.

II

America the Providential Theatre of Deliverance

From the tumult, blood, and tangle of Europe, which knew not the day of its visitation, God turned aside to the New World for the demonstration and exploitation of the freedom of soul, so profoundly cherished and taught by his Son. It is interesting meanwhile to study the movements of Providence in displays made in the New World, during some of the time when some of the scenes already recounted, were being enacted. These incidents are barely recalled here since they lend interest to that marvelous history which is subsequently unfolded.

Though the historic traces are yet dim, they are sufficiently unmistakable to establish the fact that four centuries before Columbus reached the islands on the south, the Norwegians had found their way across the seas to the coast of Iceland, and thus far in advance of the discovery of Columbus, had established the Church of Iceland on those frozen borders, maintaining bishops, sending out missionaries, and building churches. By some it is held that the temperature of that circumpolar region was not so cold as it afterward became. Be that as it may, the fact has emerged from what at first was only fanciful conjecture that, as a result of medieval exploration, came, not only a somewhat prolific colonization along these icy shores, but an active evangelization of the aboriginal tribes as far southward as the present New England. This is established by documents and monuments which seem

to place it beyond successful denial. The more southerly shores appeared to the explorers in contrast so striking with the icebound regions above, that they called the later New England ,"Vineland."

In reenforcement of the documents and monuments discovered in connection with this early period of occupation, American archeology has added a stock of enlightenment. In the Indian mounds of that region, as well as in those of the far interior, have been found beads and broken crockery, the character of which is clearly that of the Norwegians of that period. About those minor, though interesting, details we are not now so much concerned, as we are about the major fact of the attempted evangelization of the early tribes of Indians who peopled these shores. Indications point to the fact that these early ventures of the Romish priests came to an untimely end by savage massacre.

The fact is the more interesting, since this massacre took place about the time that Columbus reached the West Indies. If the interpretation of Providence in holding in hidden reserve the western continent for a fresh exhibition of religious freedom, in order to give it a new start in life, be correct, it would seem that America came perilously near a fatal and premature disclosure in this, the most inopportune period of medieval history; for at that time, "The Church" was at its lowest point of decadence. Close as the shave was, it did not come to pass, since there was a supervising Providence keeping watch on affairs, and the curtain was not to be raised on America till the ripeness of time.

Nor must it be inferred that "The Church" was any

wise fitter for a purer occupation of America four centuries later, when under the patronage of Ferdinand and Isabella, the Genoese discoverer found the islands in the far south. In the very year, 1492, made memorable by the discovery of America, the Spanish Inquisition was the bloodiest. Alluding later to that particular time, Isabella congratulated herself on the part she had in the bloody tragedy, in this language: "For the love of Christ and his virgin mother, I have caused great misery, and have depopulated towns and districts, provinces and kingdoms." In Spain was the horrid mixture of the religious fanaticism of which the language just quoted is an expression, and a ferocious thirst for blood on the part of the savage butchers. The fanaticism was that of spirits like Isabella, Ximines, Loyola, Xavier, and St. Theresa, in historic conjunction with whom appear such names as those of Torquemada, St. Peter Arbues, and the Duke of Alva.

Nor must the coincidence of the discovery of America and the first movements of the Reformation be taken as a timely providential arrangement for the planting of Protestantism on these western borders. Not in the timely coincidence of these events is the interpretation of Providence to be sought, but in the subsequent outworking of the political movements and manouvering on the part of Spain, England, and France. The time was not yet ripe on this western hemisphere, for at least a century after the discovery of Columbus, Spanish Romanism held sway in the New World.

God was now working at both ends of the line. First Catholic Spain was disposed of after an iniquitously

bloody saturnalia, then France, more intent on fur commerce than on any thing else, and lastly England, with her imbecile and Teutonic George, whose madness was equaled only by his inherent weakness. In Spain the most formidable foe to religious freedom was gotten out of the way, then avaricious France, and last, England, with her politic and half-way measure of Toleration. The history of the hemisphere in its series of tragedies and machinations would seem to sustain this brief summary of interpretation.

Only in the briefest and most general way, can this history be now sketched. Following the period of the discovery of America by Columbus, Spain became the most conspicuous of the nations in the work of exploration. In this was represented the covetous side of Spanish character, while strangely and blindly combined with it was the religiously fanatical spirit that brought forth and nourished the horrors of the Inquisition. Wealthy, powerful, daring, and covetous, Spain came into the possession of the new continent. The Moorish kingdom of Granada had perished, but in his expulsion, the Moslem had left behind him, in Spain, traces of some of his civilization—some of the best and some of the worst. In a receptive mood, under the sway of fanaticism, Spain had easily absorbed the vices of Mohammedanism, and was the more apt learner because of the inherent cruelty of the Spaniard, flavored by religious fanaticism. The period was stamped by Romish craft of the worst type.

To harvest treasure on the new continent, while at the same time making it a vast Romish empire by processes of its own, now became the twofold dominant

spirit of Spain. Confining our review now entirely to the North American continent, we find Spain entering on the south, in Florida, and in the west strangely penetrating the far interior, in the occupation of the uplands of New Mexico. Because of its spectacularity in the early annals of the country, and because it serves the present purpose of illustrating the religious policy of Spain, the enterprise inaugurated on the interior highlands of the far west, will now claim our immediate attention.

Keeping in mind the facts already named—the lust for western wealth, the passion for adventure and exploration, the influence of the cruelty of the Moors, the derivation from them of certain Oriental characteristics, and most of all, the religious frenzy of which the tortures of the Inquisition were a reflection, we have the influence brought across the seas to new America. No other condition, than this could have been more out of accord with the theory that Providence had held America back for the renewal of the original principles of the Master.

But the providential movements were mysterious, and the developments of subsequent periods enable us to trace the divine wisdom resident in the movements. We have only to note the chief facts in order to reach the culmination where we can see the arrest of the decadence of Christendom in Europe and Asia. The refluent tide from America was already being gotten slowly ready. Corruption masquerading under the guise of religion, was moving with freedom into benightment, but above all was God. While abroad were being enacted scenes of wonder, on the inland plateaus

of the present New Mexico, the Spanish Catholics began in earnest the conquest of the New World. Of the eager energy attendant on these movements of colonial and ecclesiastical dominion of the New World, the early monuments still remaining, fully attest.

In the study of the ruined monuments, there is not only interest, but instruction. The chain of mission stations extending along the western coast southward, thence eastward even into Texas, has a story of cruelty, craft, and servitude, mingled with religious fanaticism, to which is given a romantic douche all its own. The peculiar architecture of these buildings of native stone, is derived from the Moors, though locally it came to be known as "Mission architecture." In the woodland retreats, dotting here and there the western plains, these old mission churches still remain in silent ruins with their pretentious facades and mysterious subterranean passages, suggestive of cruelty and vice the deepest. In their American policy, which was a reflection of the corrupt condition of Spain, there was evident sincerity on the part of these Spanish Romanists, but a sincerity that was the most diabolical, because actuated by a corrupt religion.

The king of Spain in inaugurating his American policy in the far recesses of the continent toward the west said: "The conversion of the Indians is the principal foundation of the conquest—that which ought principally to be attended to." In this proposed work of charity, there were evoked the worst forms of Islamism, another of the borrowed elements of the followers of Mahomet. By the conversion of the Indians was

meant an enforced acceptance of Romanism. Thralled in slavery, loaded with chains, lashed and murdered when resistance was shown, the Indians were forced to the hardest labor, and the chiseled and beveled stones in the old buildings yet standing, and in the wide and high-roofed subways and underground retreats, tell the stories of blood, and of the unbridled cruelty visited on the aboriginal tribes. The priest plied his flummery of ceremonial, while the taskmaster was busy with his implements of punishment and torture. The Virgin, Mammon, and Moloch formed the trio of incentives to the Spanish conquest of the sixteenth century.

Prosecuted with vigor for a hundred years, this conquest fell to pieces. Domestic wars wasted the strength of Spain, political and moral decay set in, the kingdom declined, and finally Spanish possession vanished from the North American continent. In a summary so brief there is necessarily an omission of the historic ups and downs in the events which followed the slim recital just given, but there was nothing in the atmosphere of the new American region congenial to the spirit of Spanish Catholicism. In summing up the conquest briefly reviewed above, the Catholic historian for America says: "It was a glorious work, and the recital of it impresses by the vastness and success of the toil. Yet as we look around today, we can find nothing of it that remains. Names of saints in melodious Spanish stand out from maps in all that section where the Spanish monk trod, toiled, and died. A few thousand Christian Indians, descendants of those con-

verted and civilized, still survive in New Mexico and Arizona, and that is all."[1]

More honorable and humane was the conquest of the French. No less avaricious than the Spanish, the French were not rapacious. They did not dream of golden nuggets lying in profusion along the landscape, or shining in the clear waters of inland lakes or at the bottom of woodland rills, as did the infatuated Spaniards; but the fine furs of wild animals in harmony with the aesthetic taste of fashionable salons and gorgeous courts, fascinated the Frenchman. The policy of France was not one of bloody conquest and of the propagation of religion by chain, torture, and the sword, but the native trader was ostensibly remunerated for his furs, and was made a sharer in adventure and exploration. Besides, the French treatment was characterized by a degree of moral dignity such as that of the encouragement of the Indians in the tutelage of self-support and reverence for law and order.

In the foothold gained by the French on the northern border of the present territory of the United States, and in the south where Louisiana was the pivot of a vast and unknown domain, it might have seemed that France at one time, might have shared at least in forming the policy of the United States, but the wheel of destiny was turning, and European affairs were aiding in shaping conditions for the revival of the original form of Christianity, for which Catholic France was unprepared. Napoleon needed American gold to sustain his Russian campaign, so Louisiana was sold, and

[1] O'Gorman, "The Roman Catholic Church in the United States," Vol. IX., American Church History series, p. 112.

in the Purchase was embraced a vast region, which has been estimated to have cost the United States about two-and-a-half cents an acre. In that way, the French lost their final hold on the continent, and an immense domain was left for a solid Saxon occupancy, or at least under such control.

With the history of the connection of Protestant England with America, we are more familiar, but Protestant as England was and is, it was of that erroneous type which prevailed from the Reformation, which type favored the retention of such elements of Romanism as prevented it from becoming the supreme leader in religious freedom. Doubtless the common people of England would have made England, in time, the reservoir of religious liberty; but it fell under the sway of an ecclesiastical leadership which loved sovereignty, and the opportunity which was England's, and for which it was in some respects so eminently fitted, was lost, and passed to her domain in the American colonies.

Dominated more by policy than by principle in her making, England adjusted herself to variant conditions, but always with an eye to spoils and to territorial expansion. Hence we find under the flexible policy of England in America, under the general idea of Toleration, the establishment of an iron Theocracy, in Massachusetts, modeled on the pattern furnished by Calvin, at Geneva. In Maryland was a feudal princedom, ingeniously constructed to suit the avarice of Lord Baltimore, who, in order to beguile occupants to his purchased possession, gave it out that Maryland

was a free democratic state. But the mask was torn off when his shipload of emigrants of "three hundred laboring men well provided in all things," together "with near twenty other gentlemen of very good fashion," dropped anchor off the Isle of Wight, to take aboard "two earnest Jesuit priests" who "were quietly added to the expedition."[1]

With all the boastful pride of Roman Catholics in asserting the claim to primacy in the establishment of religious freedom in America, the claim is not worthy even of the virtue of decent travesty, when in the Maryland Assembly, in 1649, a law was enacted with a number of restrictions, among which was—"That any one speaking reproachfully against the Blessed Virgin, or the Apostles, shall forfeit five pounds, but blasphemy against God shall be punished with death."

In Carolina was fixed a realm of eight lordships with a landed aristocracy, while just across an invisible border was Virginia, a distinct English province with high-church institutions. In diminutive Rhode Island was nestled a pure democracy, while Pennsylvania had a cosmopolitan republic.

Gervinus very properly says: "It is the Englishman's boast that his constitution is open to all progress, and is plastic to the influence of every great idea, every experience, and every demand of necessity." It may be added, that while England is the most eminent among the states of Europe for national integrity, she

[1] Bacon, "History of American Christianity," Vol. XIII, American Church History series, p. 56.

[2] Lucian Johnston, "The South in the Building of the Nation," Vol. X, p. 537.

is never without an eye to the main chance, and while not always acting with respect to stern and grim principle, is on the outlook for any thing that may serve to contribute to her national preeminence. Therefore this is not the atmosphere in which to grow a purely democratic sentiment so essential to civil and religious freedom. Her liberality for these things finds its acme in Toleration, and while this may be expanded for the sake of policy, it may also be restricted for the same reason, hence its incompatibility with purely free institutions. Yet there was just sufficient ingredient of liberty in England to afford a taste of its blessedness, hence it may be called the cradle of American liberty. England thus became an excellent vestibule to the temple of freedom, and as events came about, the full form of freedom was at last gained in her choicest province.

The fact must not be suffered to drop from view that the current of freedom was running with increasing force through all the period scanned in the cursory review of the present chapter. Many events of a character most significant both in Europe and in America might have been presented in proof of the steady growth of freedom, but to have incorporated these would have carried the sketch much beyond proper limitations; so only outstanding facts have received notice in this connection, which having been presented, even thus briefly, we are now ready to find the introduction of liberty into colonial America, and to follow its devious way to its full consummation.

III

Introduction of Liberty Into America

From the trail of history thus far followed, we have come within sight of two great outstanding facts, namely, the conservation in a certain group of the genius of civil and religious freedom, and the divine concealment of the western hemisphere till the ripeness of time for the revival of the spirit of liberty, in the form in which it was first promulgated by Christ. We have also somewhat traversed the ground in casual survey, and have noted some of the conditions contributing to the planting of freedom in America, under favorable auspices which had to be prepared in advance.

Antagonized at the outcome of the Reformation, the idea of liberty came to be intimately associated with its advocates and exponents, at that period, and with the hatred which came to be engendered for these representatives of the principle, there was involved, by association, antipathy for liberty itself. The lust for power, the division into sects, and the subsequent struggle on the part of each of these sects to maintain itself, with the constant bidding of the state for church loyalty, and much else, not only obscured the notion of liberty, in its true essence, but it was cast aside in the exciting struggles of different kinds in which Europe became increasingly involved. All this served to close up every avenue to the consideration of liberty, which must have perished, had it been possible, but for the persistence of the Anabaptists and Baptists.

Aversion for these people became more inveterate with time, till they were outlawed and classed among the worst enemies of society. Outbreaks of criminality and of clandestine violence were attributed to Baptists without a shred of evidence, but their opponents proceeded on theories of their own as though they were facts, and Baptists and Anabaptists were subjected to persecution, and cast out as the refuse of society. At bottom, this intense persecution was due to the insistence, on the part of these people, for liberty to be conscientiously exercised by all alike. Liberty thus linked, by reason of the enforced association of political and ecclesiastical leaders and rulers, became as much despised as the people who advocated it. A term of reproach, liberty was thus everywhere spoken against.

Another fact not to be overlooked is that, in the scramble for power, both politically and ecclesiastically, the common people came to be neglected and overlooked, and, for the most part, despised. To those thus engrossed in ambitious schemes, nothing was more preposterous than the idea of the common herd, as it was esteemed, sharing in governmental affairs even in a most incidental way, while to think of the common people participating by voice or choice in administration, was an idea that was dismissed with contempt. The current sentiment entertained and often expressed was that the unlettered, laboring mass had naught else to do than to serve and obey those on the upper rounds, whether in behalf of the accumulation of wealth or in support of those in power. It was thought that the masses had no rights that the classes were bound to respect.

Admitting of general application to the common people, as a mass, that special group of society which clamored for independency of action, in compliance with the prompting of conscience, came in for a special share of contempt and derision. In the ostracism of this group, it was in current thought associated with outlaws, jail-birds, and all social outcasts. Thus regarded, it was not thought that one called a Baptist had the slightest claim to respect or consideration. Yet the sole offense of these people was that they insisted on the enjoyment of rights, not as prerogatives doled out by reluctant hands, by the order of courts or by leaders of arrogant ecclesiastical bodies, but as a right, divinely given, which to withhold or even to question, was itself a violation of the divine law.

Coming now to consider initial conditions in America, an evidence of the detestation with which Baptists were regarded, as simple-hearted lovers of liberty, an Act was passed by the Massachusetts Colony, in 1644, embodying this language: "Experience hath plentifully and often proved that, since the first rising of the Anabaptists . . . they have been the incendiaries of commonwealths, the infectors of persons in main matters of religion, the troublers of churches in all places where they have been . . . They have held the baptizing of infants unlawful, have denied the ordinance of the magistracy . . . the lawfulness of making war . . . and the lawfulness of magistrates making inspection into any breach of the first table."

While this was the cautious and guarded phraseology of the law-making power expressed with the highest possible dignity compatible with the subject, the pop-

ular expression of writers of pamphlets, and of the current conversation of the time, was far more bitter and denunciatory. No epithets were too vile to be used in the contemptuous denunciation of the people called Baptists. Long prevalent in Europe, this sentiment was revoiced on the shores of the New World.[1]

It was sincerely believed that Baptists were a very dangerous folk. The idea of freedom which the Baptists entertained and expressed, as opportunity was afforded, was then esteemed much as anarchy now is. To grant what these Baptists asked, was popularly believed to be that which would wreck society. The presence of Baptists in a community was regarded a menace. It was therefore deemed prudent so to load them down with contempt and so to cover them with obloquy as to make it appear dangerous to touch them in any capacity whatever. Never were lepers more ostracized or segregated outside the pale of respect, or even of notice, than were the Baptists.

No specified charge or charges were made against them in America, as had been done in Europe, only when they were arrested for disobedience of the law, while exercising their right of worship. Occasions like these afforded pretexts of humiliation and punishment

[1] On July 22, 1644, when Dr. John Clarke was being tried before Governor Endicott at Boston for preaching at the home of an old blind member, at Lynn, the governor denounced Clarke and his companions as troublesome Anabaptists, when Clarke replied: "I am not an Anabaptist, nor a Pedobaptist, nor a Catabaptist." Whereupon Endicott in a rage said: "They deserve death, and I will not have such trash brought into my jurisdiction." Burrage, "History of the Baptists of New England," p. 34.

which were hailed with delight, so despised were these people called Baptists.

Only in vague and indefinite generalities, like those found in the statute of the Massachusetts code, were the Baptists usually arraigned before the bar of public opinion. Had Baptists not been law-abiding, free from violence, and had they not led lives of uprightness, as was generally true of them, or had they afforded even a slight pretext for legal apprehension and for trials before the common tribunals, there would have been a bedlam of opposition; but they were generally noted for their quiet observance of the laws, where these did not conflict with conscience. Hence recourse was had only to general and wholesale denunciation.

Liberty thus distinctively associated with these despised people, became, in America, as it was in Europe, a matter of mockery and of opprobrium, but further still, a detested innovation. In no higher estimate was liberty held than that of a disrupter of state, church, and of society. To mention liberty was to remind of the Baptists—to name the Baptists was to excite contempt for liberty. The two were thus inseparably associated in the popular mind, and each was regarded as fraught with ominous danger to all thoughtful people. It was regarded generally a gracious aspect of generosity and of tolerance, that Baptists were suffered to reside within the precincts of respectable society.

This was the introduction of liberty into America. Nothing less than this presentation, thus briefly and plainly stated, represents this initial entrance of freedom into original American life. Laws, pamphlets,

and early books attest this, as they are available in the libraries of today. If possible, Baptists were more an object of contempt in the early days of New England than they had been in Old England. Their long prevalence in the mother land had come to be settled generally in the common thought of England and in other parts of Europe, that Baptists were a sort of necessary evil, while to find them obtruding themselves on the incipient society of the New World, roused a spirit of resentment coupled with a goodly degree of disappointment, that "they had come hither also."

As time went on, and as Baptists increased alike in numbers and in their persistent claim and advocacy of liberty, the principle itself became more intolerable as one dangerous in its popular infection, and dynamic in possibility. Persecutions continued by the arrest of men for holding meetings of a religious character, while flogging, imprisonment, and divers annoyances abounded. The Baptist meeting house at Boston was nailed up, so that the people had to betake themselves to a nearby cow-shed to hold worship, Roger Williams and others were banished for preaching freedom of conscience without the sanction of the civil authorities, and in every way possible, means were employed to throttle free speech and to strangle the sentiment of liberty.

Strangest of all, for a number of reasons, was the fact that the chief source of this New England persecution arose from Christian communities, since these now persecutors had themselves sought the New World for relief from the persecutions in the Old. These same people, now turned persecutors, had fled

from the Old World for the twofold purpose of escaping persecution, and of exercising the right of worship without the interference of the civil authorities. Nor were these people ignorant. While the settlers were generally of the common walks of life, craftsmen and farmers, the leaders and ministers, who inspired the persecution, were generally men, for the time in which they lived, deeply learned. In fact the percentage of those in New England, at that time, who were college bred, was even larger than it is at the present time. In the little Massachusetts Bay Colony were ninety graduates from the universities of Cambridge and Oxford.[1] Yet it seems that the logical inconsistency of their course of persecution never occurred to them. Since however this is to have more enlarged attention, later on, it will not be discussed here.

The reason assigned by later defenders and apologists for this inconsistent procedure of these New England religionists, in persecuting those who did not see things as they saw them, is that, inasmuch as they were unable to exercise their full right in the mother country, they did not propose to be upset in their plans in a new country whither they had come, and those who did not coincide in their views must be either suppressed or otherwise gotten rid of. Adopting the form of theocratic government established by Calvin at Geneva, in 1541, these devoted followers of his in New England laid down rules and regulations of the most rigid sort for the management of any who might seek residence within the limits of Puritanical territory. By conforming to these requirements politically and

[1] Pattee: "A History of American Literature," p. 23.

religiously, one might reside in Massachusetts, but declining to do so, the offender was to be duly punished, and might be driven out. Of the difference between this Theocracy and the Democracy founded by Dr. John Clarke in Rhode Island, and of the results of each in shaping public sentiment, there will be given a demonstration further on in these pages. In his defense of this procedure, the New England historian, Palfrey, attempts a sweeping vindication on the ground that religious intolerance "is simply self-defense when tolerance would be public ruin." This is the principle on which persecution is justified. Archbishop Laud could scarcely have put it stronger in vindication of persecution.

Baptists could have been at peace had they conformed to that ecclesiastical government in its cast-iron, hard-and-fast requirements, but it would have been a peace purchased at the expense of conscience, a depression of character, and a compromise of principle. Had this been done by these early Baptists the same error would have been committed as was when Constantine welded into one the church and state, and the results on American life would have been disastrous. Instead, they were true to their convictions, in consequence of which the standard of freedom was eventually erected in America, and became the cornerstone of our nationality and of every commonwealth in this broad land of free states. The question was fixed on these New England shores, where was first rocked the cradle of American liberty.

Another fact deeply bedded in the history of that time is not to be overlooked. Rigid as these religious

persecutors were in New England, the facts prove that they bore deeper antipathy for the views of liberty than for the Baptists themselves. They wanted none of the liberty advocated. It would have undermined and sapped their own institution. In justice to these able persecutors, it is inconceivable that they would have been impelled by sectarian spirit alone to the course which was theirs. Beyond the despised Baptists, behind the people themselves lay a principle which they persistently advocated, which, should it gain rootage and strength, would undo their own principles. Within that lay the difference between the two groups, the strong, formidable, and learned one above, and that of the small and unpretentious group below. It was a principle, and not a mere profession, that was the wedge of cleavage in New England, and later, for more than a century, elsewhere in colonial America, that was driven, blow on blow, till the fabric of opposition fell, and on its ruins was raised a Democracy, under God, as a lighthouse to the nations and to the generations to come. In an insistence like the one made in this work, these profound and fundamental principles lying between the lines of history, are those to be insisted on. One is a Baptist because first of all, he is a freeman, and a freeman in the sense of equality of freedom for all alike. To him, half-way measures of doubtful import, like Toleration, is compromise of principle, which is only another interpretation of sacrifice of principle, for principle is indivisible. To surrender a part of it, therefore, is to give up all.

Thus felt, and thus acted these harbingers of liberty on these early American shores. They were not con-

scious of the providential burden imposed on them, as the forerunners of a restored liberty on this new continent, and one designed to reach to the utmost boundaries of the habitable globe. They simply did each his duty, and beyond that none can go. The woof and warp are in the hands of the Lord, which woof and warp are the daily doings of His people. These pioneer torch-bearers of liberty, in their steadfastness to duty, their fealty to principle, without the abatement of jot or tittle, were the vanguard of the illumination of the world, though they were only plodding men and women, going about their daily tasks, in their own humble way. They were poor people, but they were an important link in the chain of the divine conservation of freedom without which a man is reduced to a scale of being below his species.

The unshaken stand taken by this small batch of men and women at that time was the more important, since it was the first effort made in the New World to give an inerasable stamp to civil righthood and freedom of individual soulship. The fact that they were so few in number, and so obscure that their names have passed into oblivion, adds fresh luster to their unflinching firmness. Had they yielded to the imperious demands of their persecutors at the threshold of the peopling of America, it is impossible to estimate what the results would have been on the future of our history. Neither are we able to trace the value of the influence of this handful of men and women on the history of the years which roll between that time and this. The fact that they not only resisted the encroachments on the sacred precincts of their indi-

vidual liberty, but so resisted—resisting men of superior advantage of scholarship, and those too who were professed and pronounced followers of the same Lord, made their attitude the more important. It was the first letter in the alphabet of liberty indelibly written in American history. Against an ecclesiastical theocracy they stood unequaled, and thus started a revolt against spiritual despotism, and in arrest of a spiritual degeneracy, and on these inhospitable shores began blazing the pathway back in the return to primitive Christianity.

More meritorious, still, was their steadfastness, since as the pioneers of religious freedom in the New World, they suffered for those who were to come after them. These humble people had not the slightest conception of that which would flow from their firm and grim stand for soul right. No eye of the seer was theirs to forecast the years of the future. Even supposing that in the animating visions of the distant future they could have seen the result of their labor, endurance, and sacrifice, they could not have been more uncompromisingly stout than they were. God had placed this humble folk as the advance guard of an army of principle which was to subdue America—a subjugation to freedom. This courage and inflexible firmness of this feeble folk found its compensation alone in the performance of present duty well done. Prophets cannot enter into the harvest of their visions. The sower is rewarded merely in the sowing for others who reap the reward of those gone before. All human patriotism displayed in the interest of advancing humanity lies buried in this single principle.

More still, while this feeble vanguard stood unbroken, it was as much in behalf of their persecutors and their descendants as for any others. These persecutors were as little aware that blindfolded, they themselves stood in the shadows of a night the darkness of which was just beginning to retire, and equally unaware were they that in the blows of persecution given, they were really carrying out a divine plan of redemption from oppression, by heartening the boldness of those oppressed. So verily does God make even the wrath of man to praise.

These early Baptists, as well as those who came after them, were styled bigots and fanatics. By the accusation of bigotry was meant their stern insistence on unrestrained conscientious liberty. There is grim irony in the fact that representatives of these persecuting sects, now that liberty has become a chief boon in American life, are clamorous of recognition of themselves as primates of its inauguration, when, in truth, they did not so much as provide for toleration. Authors of late years have been diligent in the torture of historic fact in seeking to extort some sort of plausible statement in sustenance of their claim of primacy in the establishment of religious and civil liberty, while with large indifference Baptists have merely looked on, allowing the facts for which they are responsible to repose quietly in the dusty archives of American history.

Vicissitudes of conditions never alter facts. That so much industry is displayed by others to distort the face of the facts, only proves how meritoriously the original work was done, "even our enemies themselves being judges."

But a cause so sacred in its final result and conquest, is not one for the scramble of claimancy, and least of all, where there does not exist even a moiety for such claim. There is a fact higher far than that of the mere human agency engaged in the consummation of this benediction of liberty which we now enjoy. More than all else needed is gratitude to the Most High, who, in advance, preserved in hiding the land from the eyes of the explorers of the world till the set time; chose the agents for its timely introduction; chose the occasion, and in due time gave fresh impulse to the stream of liberty, and thus provided for the restoration of men to their lost estate, in a world fitted for the abode of freemen and not of slaves. Endorsement however belated, and by whomsoever given, is greeted as a guarantee of the fact or the recognition of the truth that the Lord's will has been done in the permanent settlement of liberty on the shores of America.

The introduction of liberty into America was attended by not a little peril, since it was so violently assailed at the gateway of entrance, and assailed, too, by those who should logically have hailed it with acclamation. That we have freedom, and thus favored, are prepared to dispense it unto the ends of the earth, is an occasion of gratitude to God.

The first evangels of liberty who bore in their spirits and characters the elements of influence that revived the genius and essence of primitive Christianity on these inhospitable shores, by simple compliance to New Testament doctrine, deserve the gratitude of every succeeding generation of America.

"On all who bear
Their name or lineage may their mantle rest,
That firmness for the truth, that calm content
With simple pleasures, that unswerving trust
In toil, adversity, and death which cast
Such healthful leaven mid the elements
That peopled the new world."

History concerns itself but little with the mountain springs, the incipient sources of the majestic rivers of humanity and human achievement. But without these tiny sources there would be no immense streams. Back of all which today makes America preeminent in the sisterhood of nations; back of the invincible armies of Washington, the Declaration, the Constitution, and the clustering commonwealths which today adorn American geography, are the faithful few of distant New England history by whose fidelity to principle and loyalty to God, all these were made possible. Handing down to the future the impress of their unshaken devotion to right because it was right, these obscure heralds of Christian liberty are at least worthy of a becoming tribute from their denominational descendants.

IV

Result of the New England Persecutions.

Persecution is self-defeating. As well try to twist a rope of sand as to attempt to strangle a worthy cause by persecution. In the fever of the bigotry with which the New England persecutors charged those persecuted, they made against sound policy. Because these early Baptists sought to worship God in their own way, and in response to their own inner promptings, they did not, in the least, interfere with the rights of others, nor infringe on their prerogatives. Nor did they ever deny the same rights to others which they insisted on in their own behalf. Let men go their own way religiously or no way at all, if so inclined to do. This and this alone, is genuine moral freedom. Least of all, must the civil official not seek to domineer the conscience.

Liberty prospered even out of proportion to the persecution employed to quench it. Expelled from Massachusetts, Roger Williams repaired to Rhode Island and engaged with others in raising a higher barrier against even the possibility of persecution than ever before existed, or than was possible by his preaching at Salem. The same providential principle came into operation in New England that so much contributed to the success of the gospel in Palestine, in the early days of Christianity, when "they were scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria." Persecution begot diligence, and because the true worship was sought to be stayed in its exercise, the greater

became the effort of its prevalence. In Rhode Island there was a junction of the forces of Roger Williams and John Clarke—men quite unlike in spirit and character, but each a potent agent at a time when the qualities of both were needed.

About Williams and Clarke there has been grouped not a little unnecessary controversy, due to many missing links in the history of that time, which fact is, in turn, due to the absence of documentary evidence. They each represented a different type of leadership. No one of that early period remains more in the world's eye than Roger Williams. Both in England and in America his greatness is acknowledged. His was a many-sided character, some of the strongest qualities being set over against others not so strong. His temperament was ardent, his judgment often erratic. Williams was abundantly equipped to meet the strongest of his opponents in New England. He came to his views of religious liberty not through intercourse with others, but from his own process of reasoning. The persecution to which he was subjected deepened his piety, and made him more reliant on God. There was much gratitude in his naming his settlement—Providence. His logical discernment, elevated and sharpended by a university course, was in close alliance with his conscience.

Of altogether a different type was Dr. John Clarke. He was a man who had the enthusiasm of patience. His temperament was more of the phlegmatic order. Himself a man of university training, supposed to have been educated at Leyden University, his method was more calculating than was that of his great contem-

porary, Williams. In the serenity of his judgment, he was more far-seeing than his neighbor and colaborer, and was less influenced by the opinions of others. Clarke was more creative than Williams, and built more substantially because of his characteristic deliberation.

There was an evident providence in bringing together at such a time, these two great spirits. In the same mysterious, roundabout course of providence with which human history abounds, the strenuous reformer of Salem was diverted to Rhode Island, where came the calm and deliberate Clarke. It was a junction of strong forces in a juncture of stormy conditions. Concentration was needed—concentration not alone of strength, but of wisdom. There was stern determination across the Massachusetts border to make the Calvinistic theocracy supreme in that quarter, and with this established, all hope of the free idea of worship was gone. Of the harmony of spirit between Williams and Clark, there was no doubt, and of their cooperation in every enterprise, we have the utmost testimony. The providential junction of these two men was in apt harmony with the divine wisdom of sending forth the disciples by twos, rather than each alone. "Two are better than one," says Solomon, "because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him up." Mutuality of mind and congeniality of purpose seem to have swayed these two men of God in all their efforts in fixing an abode of freedom in the wilds of Rhode Island. On one thing

they were determined—that of complete nonconformity to the conditions prevailing in Massachusetts. The extreme to which the Theocracy went no doubt did much in fashioning the opposite extreme in Rhode Island. Freedom of soul dominated them, and to the extreme were these two men pressed because of the oppression witnessed and the experience to which both had been subjected in Massachusetts. Thus by indirection, the theocrats across the border contributed to the founding of the democracy.

Of the work of creating finally a Democracy, there will be occasion later to speak more at length. At present, we are more concerned about the conditions confronting these two men at the opening of a period of transition which meant so much to the country yet to be created, and in the subsequent weal of the world. It is not necessary to go into the question of the precedence of the two churches located at Providence and at Newport. Nor are we called on to discuss the question of the proceeding of Williams either with respect to his baptism, the character of his church, nor of his course thereafter. These are questions that come within the compass of a work that seeks to ascertain the interpretation of Providence from a chain of events that stretches through a long period of years.

Of the proceedings in successive steps and stages in the cooperative work of Williams and Clarke in Rhode Island, we know only from glimpses of history, and are left largely to a conclusion derived from results. There is much in fact that these two yoke-fellows, though of temperaments quite different, were congenial partners in the cause of freedom. It was of

permanent importance that a cause involving age-long consequences should now be fixed. It was the outset of American civilization and Christianization. The future of America, so far as pertained to those two cardinal forces, hinged on that now done at this initial outpost. A close perspective study of the situation at this time would indicate that what was being done, was as though the principal actors were fully aware of that so profoundly involved for all the future. It is to be observed that there are here now in Rhode Island and Massachusetts in operation two distinct types of freedom—the false, where there were those who did what they liked; the true, where men were free to do what they ought. As the results have shown, none were more hopelessly enslaved than were those who were seeking to reenact on these western shores a system of ecclesiastism that had so long cursed Europe, while over against that imported theory was set the other idea, now just germinating, that only where the Bible forms public opinion, can a people be free. Side by side henceforth would be wrought out these opposite notions, on these upper shores of the Atlantic.

To study the unfolding from these first movements, with attention directed to each step of the development, is to observe the unerring direction of the finger of Providence. In the heyday of power the Massachusetts plan of Theocracy was given the utmost freedom of exercise, but it was in direct conflict with the providential plan of making of this continent, not only an example, but an exemplar for the world. Here God was making his stand for restoration of that, long lost to the race, and through the medium of subsequent

events, we are enabled now to read on the pages of history the result. History is only the study of providence, and to note that which is now occurring in Rhode Island and Massachusetts, is to perceive the plan of the Most High. With increasing illumination, the scene will henceforth unfold. With a high hand, the spirit of arrogance and of intolerance, though guised in the sham of Toleration, now rides the crest. It is a spirit born of the conditions in which the situation is born. An unholy purpose of seeking enforced compliance thereto by means of violence, is directly opposed to the plan of God in making of this vast region a spectacle of freedom, a theatre for the restoration of long-lost liberty. Blinded by excess of power, unrestrained in its exercise, men are whipped, jailed, and violently driven into wildernesses of snow, for opinion's sake; sacred rights are not only denied, but ignored, and though done in the name of religion, this policy carried within itself the dynamic forces of its own destruction. Its failure lay in its chief aspects of success.

Out beyond the reach of the hand of oppression was now gathering the accumulated force of all that endured denial of right and had suffered from abuse of power, that would return with insinuating strength, and sap the very foundations of a seat of power that now thought itself impregnable. Every element of abuse was now being turned to the greatest providential use. There was a deep difference between the merriment of satisfaction derived from the expulsion of those who insisted on conscientious right, and the solid gratification of the expelled in the wild savage

environment lying along the shores of Narragansett Bay. The one impelled to increasing restriction of human right, the other to the lifting of all limitations of wrong. In view of the originally divine plan respecting America, where should we look for the interposition of God in a contention like this? History furnishes the answer.

Not least in the elements now contributed to the execution of the divine purpose, was the tutelage which men like Williams and Clarke were undergoing. Trial was making them strong, and adversity was affording them vaster vision. They were being schooled in the wider weal of the humanities. Men of faith, faith was the open gateway to God. There grew on these men the sense of the necessity of teaching the ways of the Lord more perfectly. Than this lone fact there was nothing more important in the outset of peopling a continent for a fresh coming of the Lord.

Both Williams and Clarke were familiar with the religious situation in Europe. They recognized the danger of its possible repetition in the New World. Each had sought America as an asylum of privileges not allowed in their native land. They could do in the region immediately about them that which equaled their conceptions of that which should be. More than that, than these two men none among the imported migrants were better qualified either intellectually or morally. There was a combination of conditions most favorable brought about in a most indirect fashion. Beyond making their present region of residence an abode of freedom for themselves and for those who would come to join them, doubtless their intention, at

the time, did not go. Together they wrought under the spell of consecrated duty, directed by infinite wisdom.

There was immense labor to be done. A task could scarcely have been less appalling. Nature in primitive ruggedness had to be subdued. They had not even the semblance of safe roofs beneath which to shelter their heads. No roads even led from one part of the region to the other. Only Indian trails threaded the woods, or wound along the shores of sand. The Indian tribes needed attention. For them Christ had died, and they must therefore be enlightened. Around the coast slightly northward, were settlements intent on the reproduction of European institutions on these new borders. The establishment of schools, the founding of towns, and a liberal and enforced conformity to arbitrary law, claimed the attention of the settlements in the neighboring province. Conduct and religion were subject to judicial supervision and animadversion, and Sabbath-breaking was odious especially to the vigilant magistrate. An unnatural stringency which kept a vexatious constabulary force all the time busy, was destined some time to rebound with fearful moral reaction. As was openly expressed, there was undue fear of liberty lest the lifting of the exacting bonds of requirement would lead to a popular usurpation of undue proportions of freedom. The effect of all this was an inevitable reaction when, in the expansion of the enlightenment for which their schoolhouses were providing, attended by a liberation of thought inseparable from the idea of education, the masses would gradually come to revolt. Rigidly intent as these

people were in the pressure of drastic regulation in all these spheres of human activity, whether of limb or of intellect and conscience, the sources of religious vitality were drying up, moral and spiritual animus was benumbed, and the situation was parched almost to a moral crisp, when we come to hear later of "half-way covenants," and other similar devices of compromise.

A decisive reaction would have sooner come to New England, than came, but for its arrest midway by the Great Awakening under Whitefield, in 1740; but the current that had already set in could be only temporarily stayed, and in 1819 it entered afresh on its flow, and, under Channing, reached the opposite pole of Unitarianism. The pendulum had swung completely to the other side. Thus the currents and cross-currents were active, some of them running to exhaustion, some swelling into rivers of blessing.

Meanwhile outside of New England, the influence of a flexible democratic spirit, which respected and encouraged every man to think for himself and to draw his conclusions accordingly, moved downward toward the west, and in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and the Carolinas bred an atmosphere with consequences now so clearly historic, as to place them beyond the possibility even of quibble.

The source of Unitarianism, Universalism, American Transcendentalism, and as a later contribution to the general brood, Eddyism, was the early Puritanism of New England. Natural impulse was quenched by being forced into cast-iron molds, and as time has gone on, this early school of rigid religionists has contributed to

our tongue another term expressive of the logically extreme and unreasonable rigidity—Puritanical. Morally and religiously, this is the stock contribution made by New England to American civilization and Christianity.

The two forces of Democracy and Puritanism were the first to join issue in the new America. The radical difference between them was that one was centripetal and the other centrifugal. Puritanism looked backward, and was dominated by the most unprogressive in humanity, while Democracy looked forward, gathering encouragement and strength from the multiplying elements of progress, which were coming like tributaries into the swelling current of human advancement. The eye of the American spirit was still westward, as it had been from the cry of the Macedonian shore, "Come over and help us." The eyes of Democracy were to the future, while Puritantism, intent on rooting itself, had its eyes in the back of its head.

As the years went, the combat deepened between Democracy and Puritanism. The contest was a severe one. All there was of precedent was on the side of Puritanism, while Democracy, seeking revival, after the lapse of sixteen or more centuries, after a practical obliteration from the world's thought, had become new as an idea, novel in its plea, and outwardly weak in its forces. Democracy had to hew a new way to success, and against it stood as a colossus, Tradition, formidable in its accumulated resources derived from many hundred years. But underpropped by a divine purpose, as we are now able to read on the plain page of history, there was no doubt of the ultimate issue.

Today the key of historic interpretation is free America with its flexible institutions, political, social, educational, industrial, economical, and religious. America now stands forth in republican grandeur, the pattern of universal national life. Yet its source was a little corner of the continent, Rhode Island, the smallest in area of the North American states, the greatest in historic fame.

Puritanism, widely aside of its original design, became an unconscious contributor to Democracy, by means of crowding by persecution, the elements of Democracy beyond the outer edge of Puritanical jurisdiction, thus making possible a reaction which could not otherwise have come about. Had Puritanism prevailed according to its first fixed policy, the land today would be possibly swayed by Unitarianism, but Democracy, like the Hebrew lad with his sling and stone, overcame the arrogant and vaunting giant, only with the difference of affording to the vanquished an equal enjoyment of the fruits of victory with the overcomers.

V

The Rhode Island Democracy.

Before entering more fully on the historic drift of Democracy in America, there is due the founders of the democratic commonwealth of Rhode Island, more consideration than has yet been accorded. On the western side of the capitol building, at Providence, cut in marble, one may read this inscription: "That it is much on their hearts (if they may be permitted) to hold forth a lively experiment, that a more flourishing civil state may stand and best be maintained, and that among our English subjects, with a full liberty of religious concernments." This is the language of Dr. John Clarke, the author of the Royal Charter, which he was able to obtain from Charles II.—one of the strangest facts of history, which will appear when we shall come to consider in detail the work of Clarke in London.

Around the question of the honor of founding this novel "experiment," the Democracy of Rhode Island, has raged not a little controversy, some insisting that it belongs to Roger Williams, while others insist that the palm is Clarke's. The settlement of this question is left to others, while the present intent is to adhere as closely as possible to the historic record, not so much in preference for one rather than for the other, as to extract that which the events entering into the transaction teach, while in pursuit of the main object indicated by the title of this little book. No matter

to whom the distinction belongs, it was the work of the introducers of liberty to our shores.

Some facts have thus far been ascertained beyond cavil, among which may be named that of the Baptists being the first to enunciate the notion of liberty in America, not Toleration, with which Liberty is often confounded, but Liberty itself; that they were resisted both by the legislative assembly of Masachusetts, and ecclesiastical rancor; that they were punished with the lash, by imprisonment and banishment, and that in the retreat beyond the confines of persecution, they ensconced themselves so as no longer to be disturbed, and there abidingly set up the standard of freedom. Thence began an issue and force the results of which are yet to be seen. After the settlement of the communities at Providence and at Aquidneck, the plan of a general democratic state was conceived, whether by one of the two, or jointly, is not known, nor is it important. That it was the cooperative work of both Williams and Clarke seems a reasonable conclusion, but with the fact that it was done, we are content. At any rate, the fact now alone serves the purpose at present in hand.

In 1651, Williams and Clarke were sent by the people of the united settlements of Rhode Island, to London, to obtain from the royal government a charter for a pure democracy. Williams remained in London not more than two or three years, leaving Clarke to consummate the scheme. Meanwhile the Civil War in England had broken out. Of that which took place, in detail, only little is known. Clarke devoted much of his time in the earlier part of his stay to acquainting

the English public with affairs in the American provinces, by the publication of a book—"Ill News from New England, or a Narrative of New England's Persecution, wherein is Declared that while Old England is becoming New, New England is Becoming Old." With a forcefulness that indicated the rising tide of all that is comprehended in Democracy in its contest with Intolerance, the work was written, and duly published. Founded on his own observation and experience in the New World, Clarke made an eloquent plea for freedom of conscience, in an address to parliament, embodied in four proposals, "touching the way to propagate the gospel of Christ (with small charge and great safety), both in Old England and New."

With characteristic patience, and in the exercise of rare skill evidently, he gave time for the leading public to absorb his advanced views, meanwhile paralleling this policy with one of impressing his views on the royal court. With acute appreciation of the advantage of slight opportunities afforded, he combined patience with energy, and after a stay of twelve years in England, he succeeded in gaining the signature and seal of the king of Great Britain to a charter of his own construction. Thus was born through his instrumentality, the first genuinely democratic commonwealth of history.

Left to a supposition based on the circumstances of the time, there were a number of elements wisely appropriated by Clarke in the consummation of his cherished purpose. Nerved to greater effort by the suppression of his well-known modesty which resulted in a cool boldness, the character of which was different

from that which would have been derived from a sanguine assurance, Clarke so vigorously and becomingly plied his efforts as to excite not respect and esteem only, but so as to win sympathy. In spite of his shyness, Clarke was possessed of all the elements of a born diplomat. One of more obtruding assurance could not have so perspectively probed into every rift of chance, which the cool deliberation and cautious diplomacy of Clarke rendered available, while his suavity of disposition and persistency won headway.

That the astute diplomat discovered advantage after advantage which he followed up in order, seems clear as one of the means of final success. His was a case of slight advantage, the doubtfulness of the final success of which prodded to increased effort, rather than inducing discouragement or despair. There was ever present the "hope [that] springs eternal in the human breast."

Then, besides, the soul of John Clarke was on fire for spiritual liberty, by the security of which his little colony would be blessed. He had caught the looming vision of the time. The volcanic fires of freedom burned within his devoted soul. They were unquenchable. That which was fervidly voiced by Patrick Henry, long afterward, heaved his spirit: "Give me liberty, or give me death."

To this, still, was added a sense of serious responsibility. The emergence by intense struggle of liberty from the stifling conditions of the ages, was now largely dependent on one man, and that was Dr. John Clarke. The spirit of the times favored it, but it was hindered by certain traditional sovereign agencies of

great power. The struggle between Democracy and Oppression had, for the time, narrowed to the critical point of a certain degree of control of the royal court at London. That point of militant convergence was also to be that of the emergence of a fresh outburst either of a new era of freedom, or of a new augmentation of tyranny. On the decision of one man, and he a dissolute prince, turned the issue at this critical time.

The success of Clarke is the more astounding because of the character of the king with whom he had to deal. With unanimity the English historians agree in their estimate of the man that time on the throne—Charles II. He is described as being not alone profligate, but unimpressed by the seriousness of public affairs at the time, pertaining to the British government. Given to excess of the worst vices without remorse, capricious, coolly tyrannous, and without the ambition even of a country notary in the maintenance of his throne—such was Charles II., the adventitious hero of the Restoration. With a man of this character and caliber, Clarke had to wrestle in diplomatic fencing, studying the whimsical variance of the man with the same acuteness with which the keen meteorologist studies the weather. In a long strain of study, Clarke came thoroughly to know this man, and knowing him, he plied his diplomatic arts with skill, a task most difficult for John Clarke, since he shrank from even the appearance of evil as a child shrinks from the fire.

Suppose that Clarke had failed! Suppose that he should have been compelled to return to America with the doomful news that Democracy in its infantile ex-

pression was strangled! How much depended on the issue, Clarke, at the focus of the strain felt as perhaps no other could. Seldom is one placed in a condition so momentous, and yet while possibly auspicious, it is just as hazardous. Clarke could well afford to linger in patience, and labor in persistence.

After all, were not the apparently adverse conditions favorable? Had Charles been a more serious man weighing one condition of political importance over against another; had he been one with a conscience traditionally riveted on the wrong side of the issue, and one capable of grave concern in any matter, would not all hope have perished even in the outset? Because Charles was fickle and flippant, variable, and only superficially interested in any concern whatever, being one thing one day, and the next day, another, and because he was devoid of conscience, was the situation not the more favorable therefore?

Nor is it known that Dr. Clarke was impressed by considerations like these, but in view of the conditions then prevailing, in view of the characters of the two men, as well as in view of their characteristics, this conclusion seems not without support. That the conditions were as have been described, and that the two men were as different as has been shown, there can be no doubt. Putting these together, there would seem no other conclusion possible.

Yet the extraordinary outcome may have been due to the characteristic indifference of the king; to his recognition of the remoteness of America; his perfect knowledge of the immanent troubles in his kingdom; to a desire to conciliate every faction or division

possible; to his innate ignorance of the real meaning of democracy, or to his indisposition to consider any concern with interest or care. But the last series of conjecture would seem to accord to Charles entirely too much credit. That in a moment of passivity, a sort of don't-care spirit, he yielded to the solicitations of Clarke, as presented by an intermediary, is a conclusion more consistent with the general situation.

Be that as it may, Dr. Clarke, acting in undiminished conformity to the principle of not being weary in well-doing, since in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not, finally succeeded. More than the seventh part of the life of Clarke was spent in procuring the royal signature and state seal to the charter of his own creation, and the final result justified the expenditure of the time and means, that had been spent in behalf of procuring it. This was the starting point of a new movement, a new principle in the earth, a new humanity. If Clarke was unaware of the potentialities folded within the transaction, and he was, what of the awareness of the royal Charles? Little thought the man of superficial views, though he occupied the throne, that in this action he had started a train of sequences that would eventuate in a Revolution that would sever America, as an independent province, from the empire of Great Britain! Little did John Clarke, now presently bent on procuring non-interference of the civil constabulary in the sacred affairs of his little Rhode Island commonwealth, dream of having stricken a rock from which would issue streams for the blessing of humanity! It was another occasion for the appli-

cation of the injunction not to despise the day of small things.

But in estimating the genius and merit of the transaction relative to all that entered into procuring the Rhode Island charter, which procured civil and religious freedom to the little government, we must not overlook the manifest Providence in it all. While we cannot interpret much that pertains to the long negotiation preceding the successful obtainment of the charter, there is much that is comprehensible, among which we may name the occupation of the throne at that time, by such a man as Charles II. In the adjustment of the conditions necessary to final success, the stupidity of the king is not least. The diplomat, skilled, patient, earnest, and prayerful; and the king, freakish, superficial, devoid of sagacity, and every way weak, were brought providentially into connection in the outset of the proposed plan of freedom in America. The occasion and its outflow of series of events are their own interpreters.

After twelve years spent in London, nine of them alone, John Clarke, with his precious charter of incalculable worth, was enabled to return to the New World. Never before, nor since, has so liberal a paper issued from the English crown in behalf of any one or any region. Why should it have been just at this time when America was just ready for its application? Why should a document of so stupendous moment be issued by one the least liable to do such a thing? Why should there be created one small oasis of liberty like this, in a desert of misconception, confusion, and contention? The answer is to be sought in the wise man-

ipulation of men and means by divine providence. The fact and circumstances throughout speak for themselves. It is one of the brightest chapters in the Romance of Humanity. From this event were destined to flow, in streams of beneficent enlightment, the waters for the slaking of the thirst of unnumbered millions, made free by the divine fiat, but encumbered by conditions beyond their control.

Yet not a word have we from the silent but heroic consummator of this stupendous transaction. The central figure in the historic drama, Dr. John Clarke, is the most silent. His silence has so obscured his career, that his name is scarcely known in our national history. Yet among earth's greatest benefactors, John Clarke holds an exalted place. Though his name glitters not in "the flower-crowned annals of song," his work endures with strength that gains fresh momentum with the years. He gave these golden years of his life unrequitedly, since not even his promised expenses were ever all paid, in reimbursement of the money spent to procure the first of the earth's charters of freedom. Roger Williams, who himself contributed liberally to the defrayment of Dr. Clarke's expenses, berated the people of Providence in that they "ride securely by a new Cable and Ankor of Mr. John Clarke's procuring," while they withheld payment of his expenses.

The corner stone of this model government was the provision that "no person within the said colony, at any time hereafter, shall be anywise molested, punished, disquieted, or called in question for any differences of opinion or matters of religion."

The code of laws, said to have been written by Clarke, closes with these memorable words: "All men may walk as their conscience persuade them, every one in the name of his God. And let the saints of the Most High walk in this colony without molestation, in the name of Jehovah, their God, forever and ever."

The services of Clarke were sought in the civil life of the Democracy, as long as he lived. He was elected to serve in the general Assembly, as the legislative branch of the government was called, and was continued in the public service, in connection with his sacred duties as a preacher, till his retirement from public life, but even then he was frequently consulted on all important questions. Among his achievements was that of founding the first free school ever established in America, if not in the world. It is a tribute to the far-seeing wisdom of Dr. John Clarke that the government of which he was the founder stood intact for a hundred and eighty years, or until 1842.

That the Rhode Island Democracy furnished the pattern for the American Union, scarcely admits of question. The genius of the one is that of the other. The changes and modifications of the original fabric are those suited to a larger population with varied interests, and while, in the original draft of the national constitution, there was no provision made for free speech and the freedom of the press, this was just afterward provided for in the first amendment, as will appear in a later chapter. This amendment was directly procured through the instrumentality of the Baptists.

Rhode Island thus became the depository of much

rich Baptist historic material, unwritten, traditional, and written, the last lying untouched for generations, sufficiently long to occasion not a little controversy on divers points, when once the valuable mine was opened. This long neglect gave rise to dispute, not only intra-denominationally, but others seizing on the facts, have, in a variety of ways, sought to divert much to their own credit, and especially to disparage the work done by Roger Williams, at least one writer going so far as to vindicate, in his own way, the expulsion of Williams from Salem.[1]

Had any others than Baptists been the possessors of the unquestionably meritorious history which is peculiarly theirs, the exploitation of the facts would have been vociferous. Not till within recent years, has there been roused among Baptists the historic spirit, and not till after many facts have become distorted, have the Baptists interested themselves in the conservation of their own history. This widespread misconception of who and what the Baptists were, and what they did, in the colonial period of our history, have long been unknown even to our own people.

With no desire to display the controversial spirit, but in the interest of truth, in insisting on facts representing themselves, it has long been an asserted claim that Connecticut was in close affinity with Rhode Island in founding a pure democracy. Even so eminent an authority as Gervinus, in naming the characters of the varied colonial communities of America, places Rhode Island and Connecticut side by side, as distinct democ-

[1] Dr. Henry Martyn Dexter in "As to Roger Williams and his 'Banishment.'"

racies. This genuinely democratic historian, who was professor of history at Heidelberg, was dependent on American sources for information, and the twisted facts concerning Connecticut, issued in the spirit of sectarian partisanship, on this side of the Atlantic, found their way to Heidelberg, as a source of authority accounted trustworthy, because hailing from religious sources.

However sincerely the claim may have been made, for error is often sincere, Connecticut did not pretend to become democratic, till it became so under the national constitution. Congregationalism became from the outset the established church in that colony. Connecticut became a provincial government instituted under a commission from the General Court of Massachusetts, March 8, 1635. To say nothing of the provisions made for the control of churches by the civil authorities, which need not be gone into here for obvious reasons, but until the facts are accounted for, how the first Baptist church in Connecticut, at Groton, received no attention from the General Court, when it applied for permission to build a church; and how the Baptist pastor and his congregation were imprisoned in the New London county jail, and others at Hartford, while other venerable Baptist ministers were flogged at the town post, or at the tail of an ox cart, it has the sound of the refinement of sarcasm to exploit the early democracy of Connecticut. Its democracy was of the same type as that of Massachusetts, of which we have had examples afforded in the foregoing chapters.

VI

Baptist Beginnings in the South

Up to this time our attention has been confined to the Baptists of New England, but now from that quarter they are to expand southward by the migration of a small band, who were forced out of the province of Maine by persecution, in 1684. However, before entering on this phase, it is not amiss to call attention to the fact that lower South Carolina, to which this persecuted company from Maine fled, was just then being peopled by the highest type of republican sentiment from England. These English settlers were nonconformists—those who had sympathized in the movement under Cromwell, and some of whom had been active in that struggle. It was a high type of English yeomanry. Is there any providential significance in the enforced conjunction of these elements just at this particular time? We have seen what was taking place in New England, and meanwhile, in Old England, where a strong republican element, apprehensive of the prospective ascendency of the infamous Duke of York to the throne, many had gone to South Carolina. These people were not inclined to move to America from their happy inland homes in Old England, but there was a fear in their hearts of danger if they stayed. Likewise there was a wish, on the part of those in Maine, to continue there; but God allowed persecutors, and they were driven out for the sake of conscience. Was God opening the way for the inculcation of liberty in the end of the country opposite to that of

Rhode Island, in point of colonial occupation? Was it an accident, or a mere coincidence that these English lovers of liberty were impelled to Carolina, just as persecution was crowding out a small body of Baptists from Maine, who also sought refuge in the same region? Providentially significant or not, these are coincident facts. Let us see how it came out.

There is a dash of the novel and romantic in this first settlement of the Baptists in the South. In 1656, there was a man at Somerton, England, named William Screven, who was among the signers of a Confession of Faith issued by the Baptists of that region. Seventeen years later, there was a William Screven, at Kittery, Maine, who had come from England, and at Kittery, he was a successful business man. But the fact that the Screven, last-named, did not make a profession of faith till 1681, casts a slight doubt on the identity of the one with the other. It is possible that the original Screven was the father of the latter, but the weight of testimony is on the side of the identity of the one appearing first in Old England, and afterward in Maine. In 1656 he was possibly as much a Baptist as he afterward showed, but conditions at that time, in England, were not favorable to Baptists, hence his signature to the Confession does not vitiate the possibility of his identity with the Screven of Maine. Possibly there were serious difficulties in the day of his profession at the old home, and the way to receiving the ordinance of baptism may not have been open. The strongest evidence is in the fact that when Mr. Screven reached Carolina, his age, as then known, would correspond with the date relative to the signing of the Confession. However, that is not important.

At Kittery, Maine, we find William Screven, a man of business, and a successful one, too, earnestly engaged in religious work, even before his baptism, which took place in 1681. He was of that type of man who was recognized in the community as a leader. A year after his baptism, the little church at Kittery asked for his ordination to the ministry, and thenceforth he was the pastor of the church, and general director of affairs. Subjected first to the petty annoyance of persecution, it increased with time, till the situation became a serious one to Screven and his flock, as the threats of the courts of the Establishment portended.

A crisis was approaching, but since the threatened infliction was some time off, Screven was engaged, as was shown afterward, in quietly providing means for the flight of the little flock to a safe asylum. Up to near the time when his trial was to come off, this quiet but busy man was variously engaged, and when the time came for his trial, he and the Baptist flock had fled to parts unknown.

Now comes another act in the drama. Having fitted out a small vessel for the flight, Screven coasted along the Atlantic southward, and finally appeared at Charleston, South Carolina, when he proceeded up Cooper river to a community of well-to-do English settlers located at a place which they called Somerton, a name given in remembrance of the English town from which they came, and the town in which the Confession of Faith was signed by one William Screven about twenty-eight years before. At this time, Mr. Screven was about fifty-four years old, so that if he was the

one who had originally signed the Confession, he was, at that time about twenty-six.

Screven and his party seem to have been expected by the Somerton settlers, for they were most cordially greeted, and they had evidently been neighbors to Screven in the Old World. Was it by prearrangement between Screven and the people of Somerton that he made his way so directly to that community? Had he been in communication with them for more than two years during which he was being persecuted at Kittery? Was his tardiness in getting away from Maine, which he did not leave till just before his trial was to take place, due to the perfection of his arrangements with these people on the lower coast? Was the greeting accorded Screven and his band due to the expectation of their arrival? Why was it that Screven did not stop at Charleston, but went directly up the river to Somerton? Future transactions seem to indicate that there was a prearrangement which led to this happy end of the drama.

At the head of this English colony was Humphrey Blake, a brother to the admiral, who during the sway of Cromwell had made England the mistress of the seas. Joseph Blake, a nephew to Humphrey, had married the daughter of Lady Axtell, a pronounced Baptist of the old type of English strugglers, who was with the community at Somerton, both she and her daughter being earnest and active Baptists. So that after all, Screven was at home among his former neighbors and his own people.

Screven did not fall into the error of establishing a church, for the sake of temporary convenience, at

Somerton, where all the Baptists were, but with characteristic sagacity, he fixed it at Charleston, several miles down the river. At some inconvenience, the congregation would row down the river every Lord's day, and in the evening return to Somerton. In Charleston was finally built a church of commanding proportions the equal of any other in the town, and it became the anchor of the Baptist cause in that state. Mr. Screven served the church till he was eighty-four years old, evangelized the regions round about, and established a denominational influence which became a strong asset in the province, later in the state, and which has continued to the present.

Shut in as South Carolina was, somewhat remote from other settlements on the east, and menaced by the hostile Indians and the Spanish settlements of Florida, on the west, it was, from the outset, forced, in its insulation, to become democratic in its life. As a means of common protection the people were welded into a democracy, and throughout its subsequent history, it has been the most pronounced democratic quarter of the nation. All advanced democratic movements have risen in South Carolina, among which may be named historically Nullification and Secession. Here was an atmosphere in which Baptists throve, and here logically came the first impulse to denominational organic life, in the creation of the first district association in the South, the first state convention, the first movement toward denominational education, and the first suggestion of the provision of means for an educated ministry. The plan of providence in each item of the annals, the character of the people, the type of

the first preacher, the influence gained from the beginning, that swayed in subsequent years, the men who came in succession on the scene, all point to the divine wisdom of planting this pioneer stronghold in the then extreme south.

Later came other tributaries of Baptist influence and strength, which converged not at Charleston, but in Virginia, where God would smite down the most offensive and arrogant type of imported ecclesiasticism and the most relentless foe to individual and general liberty.

It is interesting to bring into contrast the ideas of education existing in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, between democratic Rhode Island and priest-ridden Virginia under the Establishment. While John Clarke was founding his first free school in Rhode Island, Sir William Berkeley was writing in Virginia: "I thank God there are no free schools nor printing, and I hope we shall not have these for a hundred years; for learning has brought disobedience, and heresy and sects into the world, and printing has divulged them and libels against the best government. God keep us from both."[1] The contrast is not without suggestion. Free speech and general liberty for all, was what Baptists sought, while these were opposed by others. Thus ran the streams of parallel sentiment throughout.

That the currents of Baptist sentiment were setting toward Virginia, whether from Philadelphia, at this time the headquarters of the Baptists of the colonies; from Sandy Creek, North Carolina, where reigned Shubael Stearns, in the direction of Baptist affairs from

1 Painter: "History of Education," p. 308.

that quarter; and ultimately from the Charleston quarter, interest was concentrating on the Virginia situation. Philadelphia was receiving fresh installments of strength from the direction of New England, whither had come John Myles, the redoubtable Welshman, whose people had given life to the Philadelphia Association, a strong installment of which people had come to Welsh Neck, South Carolina, and were sharers in the creation of the Charleston Association, the first in the South, and who were touched, and brought into the general concentration in Virginia through the evangelistic tours of Daniel Marshall, the chief of the Stearns heralds of the gospel in the lower south. All was now tending toward Virginia, destined to become the final battle ground for the achievement of civil and religious freedom.

Conditions were gradually assuming a more comprehensive scope, and at the same time were slowly concentrating for the Armageddon of American liberty. We are now brought well within the eighteenth century, and up to this time, we hear nothing of unadulterated freedom from any source other than the Baptists, and when it has been expressed by them it has been met by stern remonstrance as a signal for the onslaught of persecution. One searches in vain all expressions of sentiment that hint at liberty, and ransacks without discovery of the idea, all deliverances, whether from civil or religious source, and not a solitary whimper of freedom is heard. We hear, forsooth, much about Toleration and loud outcries for this boon esteemed so precious to the most advanced religionists outside the Baptists; but of liberty, free and

unadulterated, we catch no note, save from quarters where Baptists are. Nor does the real comprehension of the notion come till in the after-thought of future generations, when a certain school of apologists spring up and place the effete notion of Toleration on the rack in attempted extortion therefrom of a semblance of Liberty in relief of a sorrowful past when the sublime idea was unknown among an otherwise worthy ancestry. Had Toleration, and Toleration only prevailed, the glory of it would now be theirs; but since it has passed into the limbo of oblivion, and since Toleration itself is no longer tolerated, all are clamorous of the primacy of unalloyed liberty.

Not a little was the spirit of liberty being facilitated, in the opening periods of the eighteenth century, by the growing oppression of monarchical rule. Instead of relaxing its grip in response to the rising tide of freedom, oppression held on with tighter clench, which grew still more so after the shift of the Stuarts to the Hanoverians, the Teutonic introduction into English political life. This Teutonic force eventually found its aptest expression in George III., who was a worthy successor of those who had immediately preceded him on the throne. He was thoroughly out of accord with the spirit of the times, which was beginning, though feebly yet, to pulse with the sense of liberty. The growing pressure however was squeezing out the wine of freedom. As oppression increased, correspondingly did freedom come forth. This was equally true of the autocratic throne in the mother country, and of the ecclesiastical autocracy in the American colonies. The one was only a reflection of the other. Providence

was sweetening liberty by a process of laborious exertion to obtain it. In all of the provinces in America this was proving true, especially in those of the two Carolinas and in Virginia. Born of the throes of struggling to the birth, liberty would be the more prized and guarded, when once obtained.

Again, while this was true, the forces of freedom, alike in England and in America, were slowly coming into more sympathetic touch. The stay of John Clarke in England, and especially the book which he had written and left there, were beginning to bear fruit of a more delicious character. Communications between English and American Baptists began to be exchanged, and thus slowly the web of liberty was being woven by the interlacing influences from both sides of the ocean.

God was moving on the face of the deep. With each succeeding stride, men in quest of liberty caught fresh inspiration and gained new momentum. The rigorous and exacting form of religiousness in Puritanical New England was slowly giving way, preparatory for the coming of Whitefield, whose iconoclastic methods and principles were finally to break the backbone of the Theocracy, conspiring not a little to the promotion of the cause pressed by the Baptists of the colonies. Of this we shall see somewhat more a little later on in the present volume.

Activity and even restlessness, always precursors of a coming transition, were everywhere in these opening periods of the eighteenth century. To those who looked not beyond the limits of freedom prescribed by a domineering clergy, and who were satisfied with the

crumbs of privilege doled out by the reluctant hand of Toleration, there was a contentedness, which had descended even from the Reformation. But in the distinct group which chafed under restraint of conscience, no matter how slight, there was discontent which would remain till the last vestige of oppression was gone, and the fullest freedom was ushered in. To doubt this actuation of the Baptists of this early period, is to leave the peculiar conduct of a peculiar people a historic problem. In point of inherent character they were not better than many others, nor did they excel many others in devoutness and consecration; but there was undoubtedly an innate sense of liberty within this peculiar group of society, called Baptists, that begot a discontent with prevailing conditions, and a discontent that waxed with the years. This is historically true of them wherever found, and most notably of those in the American colonies, where they took color from their environment of expansiveness, the very nature of which intensified the sentiment of freedom—boundless, illimitable.

As they came gradually to touch hands in congenial grasp across so much of the continent as had been peopled by foreign migration, with the recollection of the attempt on the part of so many to stifle the welling of their souls abroad, the spirit of freedom mounted higher with increasing invincibleness. This is as apparent in their history, as now viewed through the years, as it is among the people themselves. That which they felt within their bones, and the principles which they cherished and enunciated, now taken in connection with events and developments, subsequent

to that time, reveal an unseen but overguiding Providence as clearly as the cloud by day and the fiery pillar by night, to the migrating people of God in olden history. If this be not true, then that which pertained to their lives in the years now distant in the past, and that which they professed and sought, is utterly without significance or even the simplest meaning.

Thus interpreted, the logical conclusion is easy, if not irresistible. Adopt any other course of interpretation, and it is beset by difficulty throughout.

It can hardly be expected that the conclusions here reached will be complacently acquiesced in by all, certainly not by those who by a tortuous process of distortion seek to attribute to their own the merit which is that of the people who through struggle and storm, achieved the results of the independence now enjoyed by a great people. But unfortunately for such, the verdict of history is not in their favor. They might themselves have led, but their misfortune is that their own history is against them in the present claims as set forth. Their predecessors under the sway of other influences either only partially contributed to the ongoing events which led toward freedom, under the nebulous idea of Toleration, or else they resisted liberty outright, resisted it wherever Baptists pressed it. So far from this being undue boasting, it is simple history with its unvarnished facts frankly stated.

If again it be said that the statement made that Baptists only introduced freedom into America; defended it against all others, whether by downright opposition, or by indifference, or because of satisfaction with that which is much less than liberty in its ful-

ness, is too strong, it is sufficient to reply that it is just as strong as the facts themselves, and no more so. The facts are historic, and therefore are matters of common knowledge. They are not here recorded either offensively or boastfully, but justly. Facts are not changed by compromise of statement, nor by a show of mock modesty. What is here written is absolutely true or it is absolutely false. Which is it? By the standard of history, the facts must either stand or fall. Certainly nothing yet adduced by others has jostled the facts.

This policy pursued by the Baptists when they were a feeble folk—feeble in number, in material resourcefulness, feeble in scholastic ability, and feeble in all else than in an unflinching adherence to the doctrines proclaimed by their Lord, came to prevail. By this sign they overcame, and in overcoming, they have risen to the height of one of the most potent forces engaged in the recovery of the world from darkness and oppression. Wherever Baptists have been sturdiest in the maintenance of the principles of Christ, they have been strongest in influence and in the achievement of their appointed tasks. Acting under the marching orders of a common Master they have conservatively wrought in his name. To be conservative is to conserve, which can never be done by concession of principle, nor by undue straining. Our national democracy would be a gainer, neither by partial mergence into monarchism nor by exclusive clannishness of national spirit. A spirit of liberality, of outside helpfulness, as broad as democratic sentiment—this has made America great in the eye of the world,

and as the nation shall come to extend its influence and helpfulness to those in need, its usefulness will expand, and its influence will correspondingly grow.

Neither the carpers nor critics of the system of American democracy, nor the overplus of a clannish patriotism that would slam the door of consideration in the face of the outlying world, is aidful to the conservation of the American idea, nor conservative of American principles. This admits of equal application to all genuine lovers of freedom, whether they be citizens or Christians, or both.

The standard sought to be upheld by Baptists is not of their own erection. They did not formulate the principles by means of which the world is to be uplifted and carried forward. The source of these laws and principles is a divine one, and for that reason they should be obeyed. Nor do they feel that they could dare disregard them, and least of all compromise them in accommodation to the wishes of any. In conformity to this standard, Baptists at all times, in all the centuries, have sought to act, and in thus doing, they have been a rich benediction to humanity. They seek no credit, deserve none, for at last—"We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do." Nor is merit here being sought, but a correction of statement relative to the tasks performed, in the discharge of a simple duty. Of the difference in point of merit between this honest statement of historic fact, and that of the effort made to appropriate it by others, when the facts lie in the opposite direction, the most casual casuist need have no difficulty in settling.

At the time about which we now write, the Baptists of the colonies were merely beginning their mission. Tasks of which they then had no conception were before them. Up to this time, they had no denominational consciousness, but were working individually, or in segments. The time was approaching when with a consciousness of their strength as a people, they would work amazingly in the construction of the nation for the benefit of humanity, and for the glory of God. Their consistency won for them fresh increments of strength from sources the most unconjectured. Of this fact, we shall have opportunity to see in the next chapter.

VII

Stearns and Marshall

Conditions had now become such that events occurring here and there were gradually ripening for a great demonstration of Baptist principles in the American colonies. We have only to bring into convergence certain historic facts, and follow them in the outworking of subsequent results, and they will provide their own interpretation.

Historically, we have been carried forward to near the middle of the eighteenth century. The straggling events which have outcropped relative to the present theme have had due attention, and attention has been called to the fact that everywhere they have reflected the same sentiment, while they have tended toward a common center.

We now come on an eventful period, that of the eighteenth century, during which an incipient consummation of a character most significant to the interests of universal humanity takes place. Some of these events are far-severed and are also seemingly insignificant, but they receive enhanced importance when brought together and when studied as so many unit contributions to a consummation yet somewhat distant.

Allusion has been made to the growth of influence of the Rhode Island Democracy in contrast with the declining force of the Massachusetts Theocracy. While Massachusetts reacted on Rhode Island to the

promotion of the latter, just as verily did Rhode Island react to the decline of Massachusetts. The enforcement of statutes to make people good, by strict conformity to hide-bound requirements, was retroactive. Enforced virtue breeds evil, if not vice.

The procedure adopted in Massachusetts tended to make virtue and religion odious, and not only alienated a new generation, but dried up the fountains of moral impulse. These proceedings afford jest to this day. While there were no such statutes as "the blue laws of Connecticut," the merriment occasioned by such allusions, shows the existence of such conditions as were productive of jocularity at the expense of matters designed to be the essence of holiness. A secular, commercial wordliness set in, in consequence of this drastic disregard of common sense, to the alarm of those chiefly interested in the promotion of the common good by statutory compulsion. The Puritan literature of the period abounds in expressions of alarm and warning at the growth of worldliness, with not a little bewailment attending. Resort to "reforming synods" and "half-way covenants" to counteract the swelling tide of irreligiousness, were nothing more than devices of confession that the vaunted merit of theocracy had broken down under the sheer weight of its own cumbersomeness and no less of its unnaturalness and unscripturalness. More was needed than the clubs and bludgeons of policemen, and their bloody whips to make people pious. More than drastic domestic rules were necessary for home life. Nor was relief had in their system of education, excellent as it was in very many respects. But text books of themselves never begot

religion without the reenforcement of a practically vital example of individuality. This shift of a religious policy from a rigorous compulsion to a supplication to the erring, was an abject confession of failure, and a humiliation of a pride strutting under the masquerade of piety. Greater travesty of the pure and free religion of the Son of God was never made than under New England Puritanism, much as it has been hailed as a system of purity and freedom.

Two seemingly incidental events took place within years close together, neither of which was of sufficient importance to attract attention, and both of which would have passed into oblivion unthought-of, but for their subsequent conjunction in the creation of a mighty spiritual upheaval that has become conspicuous in American annals. At the Bull Inn at Gloucester, England, was born a little boy, the son of the unpretentious hostler. The death of the father occurring when the child was only two years old, and the burden of the care of the inn falling on the mother, left the boy exposed to the haphazard life of a child picking up the smutty jokes and profanity of promiscuous inn guests, while in this case, as in that of any unusually bright child, he was taught by the guests not only to swear, but much else equally as vicious, if not more so. Such was the beginning of the career of George Whitefield, the most eloquent evangelist of all history. Recognizing his rare qualities of mind, the mother sent him to Oxford, where he fell under the spell of the Wesleys, in their first great religious movement in behalf of a freer exercise in religious worship. The nature of young Whitefield responded to the freedom

which the Wesleys taught and enjoined, and Whitefield became a member of the famous "Holy Club," of which the pious Wesleys were the founders. Whitefield began to preach at an early age, with such a display of oratorical force, that his fame spread throughout all England. This is the first of the events alluded to above.

The other is that, in 1719, in the northern part of New Jersey, a Dutch pastor named Jacob Frelinghuysen, became deeply affected because of the prevailing moral and spiritual numbness which had come everywhere to prevail, and began a quiet series of simple religious meetings, which created a revival which lasted ten years. After that it spread to a neighboring Presbyterian church, of which Gilbert Tennent was the pastor, thence extending into the Connecticut Valley, where five years later Jonathan Edwards carried it forward to 1740. This was the Great Awakening, which more than twenty years before had begun with Jacob Frelinghuysen, while Whitefield was a child. Before coming to America Whitefield had been to London where vast throngs greeted him, and where it is said some sought their way to the church by means of lanterns before daybreak, in order to be able to get within the sound of his voice at eleven o'clock.

There was certainly a union of opposites when Whitefield went to Boston. The combination of conditions is worthy of passing notice, so extraordinary were they. There was produced an incongruous situation at once serious, exciting, and comical. Nowhere else perhaps on the globe, was there another place with an accumulation of elements so strange, and

a conglomeration of conditions so grotesque, as at Boston. Arrogance and austerity, dignity and bombast, with not a little pietistic formalism well stirred in, made up the stock of an amusing situation. Resolved into general conduct and so practiced, this resulting combination had come to be regarded as natural. It was the being a thing without knowing it. Everywhere it was met—primness, nicety, a sort of frozen statuesqueness of exactitude voicing itself in philosophic terminology everywhere—on the street, in the market, at church, in conversation, worship, and business; never seeing things as others saw them, laughing by a kind of installment, never amused at that which would excite the risibles of others, but politely scorning all who could not see things as they saw them—this was the general condition prevailing. Nor was it at all assumed. Nature had been distorted, till the distortion was itself natural. The whole was a condition evolved from a variety of circumstances, and all glued and patched together in an incongruous shape that defied description, save in the one word—Boston. Scientific, philosophic, and pietistic exactness had literally gone to seed. Religiosity, not religion, had been cast into a mold so anomalous, that it was deemed placed beyond the pale of criticism. Of the moral and spiritual depression, the inherent dry rot, they were as unaware as infants, and placidly odd was it deemed, that one like Whitefield, with his thundering anathema should think of coming to Boston to preach the gospel —incomparable and altitudinous Boston!

Never was game more luring to the hunter than was Boston to Whitefield. Himself devout, humble, unpre-

tentious, and so dissatisfied with his own spiritual condition that he daily prayed: "Lord, make me an extraordinary Christian," scenes like these begot an itching to smite Boston hip and thigh. Great in the variety and in the proportions of his make-up—carrying in his quiver eloquence, contempt for the conventional, a consuming passion for souls, sarcasm, ridicule, candor, and rugged honesty, all aimed with arrow-like directness—that was Whitefield. He was somewhat of a Sam Jones, a Billy Sunday, a Moody, and a Demosthenes rolled into one—this was the man that was to smite smug Boston. In London, every variety of celebrity as well as the mobile crowd had hung on his tongue under a spell that none could describe. Fine gentlemen like Chesterfield, and cool skeptics like Bolingbroke, together with every other phase of humanity, had listened to Whitefield with uncontrollable emotion. His eloquence rolled with crushing force over all alike with Juggernaut indifference. Among the first to meet Whitefield on the streets of Boston after his arrival was a prim Episcopal minister who with bluntness said to the great preacher: "I am sorry to see you here." "So is the devil," quietly answered Whitefield.

Whitefield thundered without ceremony on the awful horror of hell, a profound sense of sin, a definite perception of Christ as the Savior of the individual soul, and a resulting spiritual experience of confidence and joy, but on personal accountability for choice of course in the religious life, he laid much stress. Not what others had said, not the choice of parents or of any others, but the soul reined up before Christ in the

selection of all courses of duty—on this he laid great emphasis.

Among thousands of others uprooted from convictions derived from traditionalism were two brothers-in-law, Shubael Stearns, a Congregationalist, and Daniel Marshall, a Presbyterian minister. Long averse to the despised Baptists, everywhere spoken against, these two men were destined providentially to become the unconscious molders, in large part, of the pronounced sentiments held today by Southern Baptists. The "New Lights," as the disciples of Whitefield were derisively called, and later stigmatized as "Separates," were not embodied in a distinct organization, but many remained in their former connections, giving new color to them, while others still sought other church relations. It was six years before the studious and reflective Stearns became a Baptist, and later a minister. With an enthusiasm that abode with him, he was impelled to go South, where he learned that the famine of the word was sorely felt.

Stopping for a time in Virginia, it is not known how long, Stearns was most zealous in dislodging the General Baptists from their lax and flabby notions, preaching the gospel as he found it presented in principle by Christ, and in imitation of Whitefield, urging individual duty, no matter at what cost, and regardless of all else than that of compliance with the will of the Master. A stranger with a new mold of doctrine, Stearns was at first received with a goodly degree of suspicion, which he not only overcame, but transmuted into profound confidence. It was Stearns who first touched into life among the Virginia Baptists, passive resist-

ance, the result of which has made them justly famous in church history, as the foundation-layers of civil and religious liberty in America.

Fired by enthusiasm, like his brother-in-law, Marshall had gone from the Whitefield meetings to the Mohawk Indians, on the Susquehanna, indulging the belief that he could win them en masse to the Lord, and while not wholly discouraged in his worthy mission, a war among the tribes admonished him of the prudence of flight to safer regions. Possibly without the knowledge of the presence of Stearns in Virginia, Marshall sought that region as an asylum from the militant tribes on the upper river. In Virginia he was baptized, and like Stearns, became a Baptist minister. Henceforth they were to be inseparable in their work. After some time, Stearns received a pressing message to go on to North Carolina, and at Sandy Creek, in that state, he settled, and made it famous as a center of Baptist propaganda.

Sandy Creek became a missionary seat whence issued men by the hundred who ranged in missionary itinerancy to the shores of the Chesapeake, in one direction, and to the Savannah, in the other. Trained by Stearns, they taught as he had first been by Whitefield, in proclaiming genuine Calvinism of doctrine, and in Virginia especially, of inculcating the force of moral courage in passive resistance of the arrogant encroachments of the Episcopal Establishment. It would be difficult to find in the records of church history a more striking demonstration of Providence in this prolonged panorama of preparation for the stand to be taken in behalf of liberty in all its aspects. Frelinghuysen,

Whitefield, Stearns, Marshall, and many other agencies are made to contribute to this grand finale, while, at the same time, many other causes are helped and impelled.

Daniel Marshall was an ideal evangelist for his time, and while he occasionally went into Virginia, his tours were usually westward. In this way he touched with congenial force the movement rising, in increasing strength, from the direction of Charleston, then guided by Oliver Hart and his worthy compeers, and through the instrumentality of Marshall were brought into the general power centering in Virginia for the coming combat with the most ferocious of the Establishment forces. Conditions ripened fast, when once the situation became encouraging and stimulating. Within the brief period of fifteen or more years was crowded germinal Baptist forcefulness for the future development of the denomination, for the country, and ultimately for the world. In the North Carolina contingent was the evangelistic element; in the South Carolina group, the seminal force of denominational organization and education, while in Virginia was elicited the spirit of aggressiveness, so necessary at this time to afford a steadiness of denominational strength. All of these elements so necessary to denominational symmetry, had at last, though yet only partly, come somewhat into unison. Of the transcendent importance of the precedence of the fundamental principles of liberty, the sunderance of the church from the state, and all that came within the movement now looming large on the horizon, indications became more apparent as the years went. Just the type of work done by Stearns

and his missionaries; the character of the organic forces inaugurated by Oliver Hart, and the firmness displayed by the Virginia Baptists, in withstanding with so wise a spirit an imperious Establishment—all these were now incipiently active without being aware of the grandeur of the outcome, or without having the dimmest conception of the ultimate result.

When we contemplate the combination of these initial agencies and the events and transactions preceding the final union of forces; the type of leadership engaged in the direction of each instrumentality, as well as that which was wrought, we are reminded of the Acts of the Apostles and the fusion of forces under the divine Spirit for the first great expansion of the spiritual kingdom westward. If the latter was a mere matter of chance and only a happen-so, so was the former. The same play of so-called chance existed in Europe and Asia, as in America much later, and the same God omnipotent reigned in each instance.

There is another phase of the situation, then existing, which deserves notice, and one which seems entirely justifiable of mention in this connection. The impression independently gained by Whitefield of the burning necessity of an emphatic revival of the doctrine of regeneration, long obscured by state-churchism and its accompaniments, together with that of the sovereignty of God, and the individual independence of each man in the choice of course to be pursued, were of prime practical importance in the upheaval of sentiment, just at this particular time. These doctrines, so closely knit into each other, always important, were now especially so. Conscience, heart, and sentiment

of a wider and deeper scope were in especial demand, a fact now seen more clearly in the retrospective, than then appeared to the actors on the scene. A new consciousness of God and a new assurance of individual salvation through a psychological experience, were just now needed. It is a historic fact that at William and Mary College, and other schools, the students were debating such questions as, "Is there a God?" and "Is Christianity conducive to the weal or woe of man?"

Why was Whitefield with his rare gifts of popular address, his irresistible powers of persuasion, his deep convictions of Calvinism, keen discernment of individualism as an indispensable adjunct to real religion, unshakeable in the entertainment of them all, though they now ran counter to a contrary sentiment, called on the scene just at this time? Why was he, so young and so exposed to dissuasion from their entertainment even by those whom he held in great honor, and equally exposed to being spoiled by popular plaudit, so inflexible in his tenacity of these deep and essential views, which burnt like volcanic flames with him? Why, in cool defiance of well-known opposition, did this gigantic young man flame forth with withering force against the powers of sentiment arrayed against him? Was all this only accidental? One never acts but from motive, and what was his motive? Why just at this time was he led to the head of a movement which had its beginning when he, as a child of three or four years, was playing about the floor of a wayside inn? Why were there brought under the spell of his persuasion and conviction two men, stout even to the verge of obstinacy, in the former entertainment of traditional views, as were Stearns and Marshall, and why were

they led voluntarily into connection with a people in the despicableness of whom they had before shared? Was there anything of the Rhode Island influence, now become potent, added to the force of Whitefield, in bringing about so astounding a change in the lives of two such men as were Stearns and Marshall? Neither was a young man, thereby possibly evanescent or effervescent in sentiment, but they were each a man of ripened maturity. Was this a mere series of accidents? Since all that has been named just above was so essential to the approaching Revolution, may it not be possible that the hand of God was in it all? Thus might continue to be raised one query after another of the same import. No answer is here essayed, but the questions are at least suggestive. If all this came about accidentally, it is a most remarkable chain of accidents!

Whitefield was a Calvinistic Methodist, whatever that is, though it is quite as easy of definition as is an Arminian Baptist. Neither is free of obliquity, and they are clearly a stand-off. At the time of his conversion, the lines between Calvinism and Arminianism were far more sharply drawn than they now are, hence the greater the wonder that he was a Calvinist. Thus much may be historically said of the early environment of Whitefield. At the time of his conversion, the timely movement begun by the Wesleys was the most distinctive evangelistic one of the time. While there was much in this incipiency of Methodism that fascinated Whitefield, there was much that he could not adopt, and with manly frankness he told John Wesley so. Wesley was not a little displeased, and there came a rupture between the two Methodist leaders, but one

that was afterward healed. The spontaneous freedom of the Methodists, the natural shout, and the vociferous "Amen," of the worshipers, the freedom of expression throughout, caught the ardent young convert, but when he came to examine the groundwork of the doctrines of grace, he did his own thinking, and reached his own conclusions. To Whitefield a man must be free or nothing. This was a strain that ran throughout his preaching. Besides all this, as has been before shown, none were more despised than the Baptists at that time. While in spirit and in doctrine a Baptist, Whitefield was a professed Methodist to the end, though he was a Baptist in all but name. He was no more a Baptist, however, than was the great General Baptist leader, Paul Palmer, together with many others of the same school, were Methodists.

Clinging to these views with grim tenacity, Whitefield preached them in no uncertain way, which operated with great effect both in New England and in the South, through the agency of Shubael Stearns and Daniel Marshall, and through these men lent enduring color to the Baptist denomination in the South. This being true, our people are not a little indebted to Stearns and Marshall for their impress on the character, especially of the General Baptists of Virginia and North Carolina, in changing their policy and their doctrines to those taught by these men, who derived them by a rigid study of the New Testament, and who became Baptists because they had not where else to go. The labors of these faithful men of God are among the richest inheritances of the Baptists from the past.

VIII

The Virginia Struggle

The theatre had long been in preparation, and the stage was now set for the drama of the emancipation of conscience and the sunderance of the church from the secular government. The story of the struggle in Virginia has been too often recited to require a repetition in historical detail at this time. The present task is that of seeking to find the purpose of Providence, as the history is pursued to the culmination of a struggle involving so many centuries. To obtain an appreciation of the affairs in Virginia a few years before the Revolution, a slight survey of the situation is necessary.

Of all the regions of America under the domination of the minions of the British king, Virginia was ecclesiastically the most severely ruled. The order of the Establishment in Virginia was High Church, and the management of affairs was largely given over to the clergy of the Establishment, who, according to the Episcopal historians, Bishop Meade and Dr. Hawkes, were generally hirelings, working as government employees, with no sense of sacredness of obligation connected with their work.[1] To them, the ministry was merely a job. The chief concern of these men was their pay, which was again dependent on the direct

[1] Bishop Meade: "Old Parishes and Families of Virginia," Vol. I, pp. 118, 385, etc.

Dr. Hawkes: "History of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Virginia," p. 65.

taxation of the people. According to the idea and policy of the English Establishment, all who reside within its dominions are accounted members of the Establishment, unless under the condition of toleration, in which event certain privileges are granted, but these do not exempt from the taxation in support of "the church." A body of land was provided by the government, a comfortable home, servants, horses, a carriage, and some other incidentals, were all procured from the revenue derived from taxation. The parish priest had only to attend one "service" which he conducted one hour each Lord's day, in a church which was also built from the taxation derived by special assessment of the people. These priests had their well-tilled farms and gardens about their homes, while they found diversion, for their days of leisure, in hunting, fishing, card and wine parties. At different times, as the printed laws of Virginia still remain to show, the licentiousness of these priests became so notorious as to call for special legislation of a punitive sort, for the better protection of society.[1]

At the disposal of this clergy of the Establishment were placed the little local courts, a host of petty officials like magistrates, sheriffs, and deputies, in the enforcement of the laws, largely at their dictation, and almost all the persecution visited on the Baptists and others, if not indeed all, was at the instigation of these clergymen of the Establishment. They lived in perfect comfort, had abounding leisure, and were notoriously indolent. They had no care of the common people, and never were known to interest themselves in their welfare. As well-clad gentlemen, they never

[1] Hening's Statutes, Vol. II., p. 384.

greeted a common man on the roads when they would meet him, and manifested no interest whatever in the general weal. For officiation at marriages and funerals, fees were exacted, and a marriage in order to be legal must have the officiation of one of these clergymen.

No right to worship except by stipulated license, was granted any outside the parish churches, attendance on which was required by law, and failure to comply with this requirement subjected every one to a fine and other punishment. All other assemblies for worship were deemed a nuisance, and a disturbance of the peace. It is easy to see therefore how a people like the Baptists would be exposed to the wrath of the parish priests, and how plausible were these priests in seeking to have broken up all assemblies of worship undertaken by the Baptists.

In contrast with this situation, respecting the English clergy, Baptists were extremely poor in this world's goods, were generally illiterate, ministers as well as all others. They lived off the produce raised on rented land which was tilled by men and women, boys and girls, eking out a bare existence. Their garb was often not only very poor, but even shabby. They were ranked the lowest in the order of society, and esteemed unworthy of consideration. The Baptists were noted for their rugged honesty, homely virtues, and strict regard for the law. The chief offense against them was that they were poor and illiterate, and firm in their religious convictions. It was chiefly because of the characteristic last-named, that

they were brought into acute contact with the haughty Establishment.

In order to worship, Baptists had to observe as much secrecy as possible, arranging by common understanding among themselves to meet at different times at points in out-of-the-way places in the woods, or else in some one of their own little cabins in the most distant retreat, and never without fear of interruption, as the secret detectives of the Establishment were ever on the scent for religious offenders. Conditions like these roused the honest indignation of Stearns, to whom the deplorable situation in Virginia appealed, when he made the astonishing discovery of the treatment meted out to the Baptists of that province. Persecution overreached itself again, and conditions like these hurried to the swift destruction of the Establishment.

Under the inspiration of the missionaries of the Philadelphia Association, and emphatically under that of the missionaries from Sandy Creek, the Baptist masses waxed in boldness and courage, which showed itself first in more frequent assemblies of worship. Here was where the spirit of passive resistance began, and by means like these it was nourished and augmented. But it was met with a corresponding intensity of persecution, and one designed to put an end to a people so persistent and pestiferous as were the Baptists.

The story of the persecution is too long to be repeated here, hence we shall confine ourselves to a general outline reciting just so much of its history as will show its drift in the execution of the task now in hand.

There were three forms of persecution in clearly distinct stages, adopted by the Establishment, in its attempted suppression of the Baptists. That in each of these stages there was a premeditated policy agreed on by the ecclesiastical authorities seems clear, from the uniformity of the procedure and from its simultaneousness in all the Virginia counties. It is not believed that in advance the three distinct stages were in contemplation, but as the one adopted would fail, another of a severer type would be taken up.

The first of this series of persecutions was that of petty annoyance. In the resort to the deep woods for worship, detectives would spy out these secret retreats, and would resort to every possible means to break up the meetings. While hiding in the underbrush they would throw sticks and stones and other missiles among the crowds. Lizards and other reptiles would be turned loose among them, and indeed any means were used by which the people could be scattered. Methods like these failing, recourse was had to the most shocking courses of conduct. Men would suddenly appear on the scene with a bottle of liquor and a deck of cards, would sit down in front of the preacher, and with loud cursing and obscenity begin to play, utterly ignoring the preaching, while now and then in mock courtesy, the "parson" would be offered a drink. Or while baptism would be administered in some quiet retreat, men would ride into the stream on horseback, with shocking imprecations in contempt of the ordinance.

Disturbance of this character failing, recourse was had to means more violent. Preachers while in their

plain pulpits, would be set upon with heavy sticks, clubs, and with whips of heavily-leaded heads—they would be knocked down amidst the screams of the women, and the cries of excited children, while the preacher, red with his own blood, would offer no resistance. There was consummate wisdom shown by these humble men of God throughout this brutal ordeal of years, in withholding the slightest physical defence. At a word from these brawny sons of toil to the multitude, the ruffians would have been torn to pieces, but never was a finger raised either in self-defence, or in behalf of friends. The upshot of all this was an increasing number of religious meetings, and a rapid growth of the Baptists by accessions of membership from the common people. Charges trumped up, would result in men and women being dragged from their cabins or fields before prejudiced, petty courts, where they would be heavily fined, and the fines would be forcibly collected.

This method of persecution again failing, the next step was that of imprisonment of preachers. It had now been almost a hundred years since imprisonment for preaching had been practiced in Massachusetts and Connecticut, and in the growth of the sense of liberty, during that time, the practice had become somewhat a dim memory; but now it was to be revived in Virginia. The sense of the gravity of such a venture did not fail to impress the persecutors, but a desperate determination to do away with the Baptists was a passion too strong to be overcome by suggestions of caution. It seems to have been thought that a course attended with so much humiliation would speedily induce sub-

mission on the part of the Baptists. To order a proceeding so grave, it was necessary to found it on a charge of sufficient seriousness, so the charge of disturbing the general peace of the community was hit on. The venture was accordingly entered on near Fredericksburg, where three or more preachers were holding a meeting. They were arrested, placed under heavy bonds for their appearance at court two days later, possibly with the double purpose in view of giving an opportunity to the preachers to recant, and of showing a certain degree of consideration by not being in a hurry to punish the offenders.

The news of the arrest of the preachers spread excitement and alarm throughout a number of adjacent counties. The news reached Patrick Henry, more than forty miles away, who mounted his horse, and over rough roads went to the scene of the excitement, as much to confirm the fact as to be present at the trial. Just as Mr. Henry was finding a seat in the court room, the scene began. The preachers, three or more in number, were brought in and placed in the rude dock, while the insignificant magistrates, gowned and wigged and with mock dignity, took their places on the bench. With a ridiculous assumption of gravity, the royal prosecutor arraigned the preachers for "preaching the gospel contrary to the law, to the disturbance of the general peace." Henry, whose speech against the crown had made him famous, had already been recognized by many in the audience, suddenly rose, at this juncture, with all eyes fixed on him, and said: "May it please your worships, what did I hear read? Did I hear that these men whom your worships are

about to try for misdemeanor are charged with **preaching the gospel of the Son of God? Great God!"** The state prosecutor "turned pale with agitation," and the court was, for the time, seemingly disconcerted, but recovering, the trial proceeded. In extorted frenzy of declamation, the prosecutor ranted, and though, in reply, John Waller, one of the prisoners, defended himself and his associates in such way as to turn to practical account all that the prosecutor had said in his speech, the men were duly condemned, when the court sought to dissuade them from further preaching, proposing to set them free on a promise of desistance, all of which was declined, and the preachers were marched off under guard toward the county jail. As they passed along the streets of Fredericksburg under the officers, and gazed at by the curious crowds, they broke into singing, "Broad is the road that leads to death."

Once entered on, this method of persecution was kept up throughout the counties, but so far from being humiliated, as was supposed would be the result, preachers accounted themselves honored in being able to suffer for a cause so righteous. They preached through the jail windows to the thronging hundreds, with a result seen by all but the judicially blind, for the Baptists only grew the stronger. The scenes of the Dark Ages were reenacted in miniature in Virginia, ecclesiastically inspired in one instance as in the other. The Revolution coming on, after several years, put an end to this procedure.

There was thus swung providentially into the current of liberty the political element of civil freedom. It is worthy of attention that up to this time not an-

other religious people than the Baptists had ever given expression to the sentiment of liberty. The effort to identify toleration with all its capriciousness and selfishness with liberty, is puerile, and seems to proceed on the idea of so confounding the terms of liberty and toleration, that no discrimination can be made between them. Toleration was essentially selfish, since it was sought in behalf of religious sects each for itself, whereas liberty was for all. Toleration was as selfish as persecution, only that one was peaceable, while the other was violent.

Others there were who could have aided in this struggle, and who should have done so, by every consideration known, but so long as they were snugly ensconced in their security, content with the paltry crumbs meted out with reluctance by the hands of ecclesiastical domination, they were content. Nor did they appear on the scene, till the battle was practically won by the Baptists.

When somewhat later than the period to which we have come, through the agency of the ruling ecclesiastical forces, more stringent measures were legislatively proposed in restriction of the scanty privileges accorded by toleration, then, and not till then, do we hear of the Presbyterians in the Virginia Valley interceding, not in behalf of universal humanity, but in behalf of themselves. Undue merit has been accorded a deliverance made by the Hanover Presbytery, in 1772, on account of which deliverance, **The Central Presbyterian,** of St. Louis, Missouri, in its issue of May 16, 1888, boldly avers that this was the "advance guard of that army of remonstrances which so vigorously at-

tacked the Establishment, and finally overpowered it and established perfect religious liberty on its ruins," and "that the Presbyterians anticipated the Baptists in their memorials asking for full religious liberty." Not to become controversial, but to keep the record straight, since an assertion like this has been made, and repeated with frequency, alike by word of mouth and by the printed page, abundant rebuttal will be afforded, as we shall proceed in a quiet unfolding of the historic record from this time on.

As to the much-vaunted Hanover Remonstrance, it may calmly said that it did not appear till long years after the Baptists had undergone the persecutions recited, nor would it have appeared when it did, had not the restricted privileges of the Presbyterians become so seriously affected. It is a voluminous document, this Hanover Remonstrance, but it is confined exclusively in plea to the Presbyterians themselves, and supplicates what? Not religious liberty, but a continuance of the stinted toleration doled out by domineering hands. There is every aspect of obsequiousness to the powers that then were, protestations of a willingness to comply with all existing demands under the Act of Toleration, and not a remote squint at either civil or religious freedom. But for its prolixity it would be inserted here in full, but it is easily accessible to all who may wish to examine it. With the conditions asked for in that document, now existing, we should still have a state church in all its horrid proportions in these American states. But as will appear later in these pages, there is no foundation for the claims thus set up either by the **Central Presbyterian**

or in the books of labored argument published by anxious authors, now that religious liberty has proved so universal a benediction. With this, the subject is here dismissed, and the matter is left for the developments hereinafter to be made.

We come now to the consideration of matters far more serious of consideration than that of a dispute of primacy in a worthy cause, since unquestionable history will take care of that. None others than the Baptists had up to this time grasped the full significance and meaning of liberty as it had been concretely expressed in Rhode Island, where a democracy had now been standing over a hundred years, exhaling an influence that had disrupted the theocracy of New England, while it had spoken louder than speech in the generation of an atmosphere which would soon afford evidence of a most substantial character, now that the Revolution was looming large. Beyond religious toleration, none others than the Baptists had, up to this time gone. Of this there was an abundance in the air, but toleration is a favor granted solely by men, subject not only to limitations, but to partisan variations, while liberty is as much a gracious gift of God as is faith, love, or hunger. As well deny the exercise of these, or attempt to abridge them, as to try to limit conscientious liberty.

"The freeborn has no chains to prove;
Or if a chain, the golden one of love;
No fear attends to quench his glowing fires;
What fear he feels his gratitude inspires."

Liberty seeks for equal rights for all alike irrespective of rank or station, while toleration is nothing

more than the best bargain I can strike for myself, and, at bottom is essentially unadulterated selfishness.

Because of liberty being inherent in these people in the back districts of Virgina, the task was providentially imposed on them to round up conditions for the permanent establishment of liberty in America. Others far more favored, socially and intellectually, might be content with half-way measures and compromises apportioned according to the dictates of a haughty ecclesiastical ilk, but in the cabins and on the stumpy patches of Virginia, God had a people to whom liberty was more prized than ease, and dearer than life. This operated as an irresistible engine within their vitals. The body might be killed, but not the soul.

For more than a hundred years, this spirit had now been pervading colonial sentiment. At that remote time, liberty was accounted a dangerous "fancy," "fanatical" and "chimerical," a perilous "innovation," worthy of nothing more than to be stamped out. Who bore this sentiment of freedom to these colonial borders? Who sought to press it on the attention of the public? Who that was willing to endure banishment, flogging, imprisonment and other maltreatment in its maintenance? Who had persistently, tenaciously, and even doggedly clung to the principle alone and single-handed through every obstruction? In the light of the fair and faithful trace followed in the present record, let the answer be impartially made. All along, without a break in the consistent continuity, the altar fires of freedom had been kept burning. Who was it that replenished them, till now they were beginning to burn in the bones of men throughout the colonies against the encroachments of an imbecile king? Here we have first the cause, then the effect. That there

was a hidden hand guiding throughout, is most gratefully acknowledged, but in that guidance and governance was an embodied humanity that neither hesitated nor feared to follow that hand.

For the consummation of an end divinely sought, human agency was needed. God's plan is a man. What people were this chosen agency? To whom pertain the suffering, sacrifice, and endurance, during these successive generations? Who that kept to the front this inestimable sentiment and principle of universal human liberty? Let the question be answered at the tribunal of history.

With the characteristic unhurriedness of Providence, ample time was given in the American colonies for the saturation of the detached portions of population with this sentiment of freedom. As has been shown for more than a hundred years, the Rhode Island Democracy had been standing where it was planted first on the outskirts of American civilization like a lighthouse on the shore of a dark and stormy sea; the mistaken hand of persecution had occasioned the planting of liberty on the far southern shore of South Carolina; the iconoclastic Whitefield had shaken the dusty foundations of traditionalism in New England, leading to the incorporation of the same principle in North Carolina and Virginia, and thus were the elements gradually gotten into readiness for the break of the storm in behalf of general liberty. The successive links in the chain of providence are as much in evidence as any historic facts can be. Somebody was employed in the inculcation and propagation of this principle. Who was it? To the fair and impartial discerner and philosophic student of history the question is submitted.

IX

The Baptists and the Revolution

Several vital and important events now take place. For one thing, we have now for the first time, a denominational consciousness. Toward this, events had been tending and pointing for many years. For the first time here come into unity denominational organization, evangelization, and stabilitation—a fit trinity for the culmination of human liberty, toward which past events had been gradually and effectively conspiring. Nestled in the movements taking place and issuing from the different points of Baptist influence, was this spirit of final unity. Here the Baptists as a denomination first girded their loins. Through the Baptists of Virginia all that was embraced and involved in the preparation of the coming struggle, as well as in the execution of the stupendous task, was to be expressed. They stood in immediate contact with the rankest form of a contemptuous hierarchy, which in its bloated vanity proposed to ride down the humble servants of the Lord. There was the pride that goeth before destruction, and the haughty spirit before a fall. The irony of history was here displayed, as it often is in human annals, where the high-handed and vainglorious seek to assume divine right. There is deep philosophy in Lowell's lines:

"Careless seems the great Avenger; history's pages but record
One death-grapple in the darkness 'twixt old systems and the Word;

Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the
throne—
Yet the scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim
unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above
His own."

Baptist denominational consciousness flowered first in Virginia, justly, and for a supreme providential purpose. Never was a haughtier spirit laid low by one more humble and despised.

A situation of vaster magnitude than was first apprehended faced the American colonies at the outset of the Revolution. That which was to upbear them chiefly throughout was not, at the time, within sight. A wave of enthusiasm swept over the land, but enthusiasm could not equip and feed armies, fight battles, and gain victories. Elements more substantial than warm passion were needed.

There was a peculiar juncture of affairs in the beginning of the Revolution, more easily seen now, than then. Great Britain was the most powerful of the nations. Her mastery of the seas was unquestioned. Her successes in numerous wars were a mere matter of history. Her statesmen were the leading giants in the world's statecraft. Her generals were commanders of recognized skill. Her armies were seasoned veterans. Her implements and ordnance of war, the best then known. Her treasury was ready for any strain that might be made on it. The colonists had no army, no generals, no equipment, no developed statesmen, no government, and the colonial population was a mere strand of unconnected settlements strung along the

eastern seaboard, scarcely three million, all told. But a danger of graver magnitude than was at first thought of, was that of the Toryism fostered by the English Episcopacy, otherwise called the Establishment. There was one fact that took the edge off the institution pre-eminently known as "The Church," and that was its ministry had no vital touch with the common people, and at this time, the common people had again come into their own, as they were the backbone of reliance in the pending crisis.

Fortunately for the Baptists, they bulked large among the common people. While, of course, all of this class of society did not belong to the Baptists, by their influence they more swayed that underpropping element, than did any others. Indeed, they were influentially dominant among the common classes. How events work round! The despised had become the most exalted. The world is kept going by ordinary men. In great crises, they are the forces that bear aloft causes. The influence of the Baptists was now little short of the supreme. This was everywhere true. Their strongholds at the chief denominational centers—Rhode Island, Philadelphia, Virginia, Sandy Creek, and Charleston, were not only strategic points, but they were sustained by a stouthearted yeomanry. Ridiculed as the Baptist ministry was, it was nevertheless a strong contingent of the forces of the common people, commanding in influence, and universally esteemed for their devoutness of character and their interest in the welfare of the people without respect to any other condition than that they could render aid when and where needed.

Before the Revolution was ushered in, the American population was pervaded by a sense of liberty that sank more deeply than surface passion, and in the souls of men it was resolved into a granite principle. Baptists had been in the fires of persecution, and now inspired by the possibility of securing soul liberty, were ready for the fray. More responsible than any others for the creation of the spirit of which the Revolution was born, they were the better prepared than others for its substantial maintenance. This was the practical situation as the colonies stood, on the eve of the Revolution.

It is a significant fact, and one suggestive of the kinship of freedom which inspired American Baptists, that in England there were Baptists praying for the success, political and spiritual, of our own country. Not only was that true, but in the circle of Britain's greatest statesmen, were those whose hearts swelled with Saxon pride, when in peril to themselves they voiced the sentiment of sympathy and hope in behalf of the American arms. Earl Chatham, with a boldness unexcelled, standing in his place on the floor of parliament said: "Thank God that America has resisted the claims of the mother country." Not less emphatic was Edmund Burke, the eloquent, whose speech on conciliation is a permanent classic in our tongue. But Baptists like Dr. John Ryland and Dr. Rippon were as much enlisted in the struggle for American liberty as they well could have been. Writing from London, after the close of the Revolution, in 1784, Dr. Rippon said in a letter written to President Manning, of Rhode Island College, now Brown University: "I believe all our Baptist ministers in town, except two, and most of our brethren in

the country were on the American side in the late dispute. . . . We wept when the thirsty plains drank the blood of your departed heroes and the shout of a king was amongst us when your well-fought battles were crowned with victory; and to this hour we believe that the independence of America will, for a while, secure the liberty of this country, but if that continent had been reduced, Britain would not have been long free."

Robert Hall says that when he was a little boy, during the Revolution, he heard Dr. Ryland say to his father, the elder Hall: "If I were Washington I would summon all American officers in a circle around me, and I would order one of them to bring a lancet and a punch-bowl and we would bare our arms to be bled; and when the bowl was full, and we had all been bled, I would call on every man to consecrate himself to the work by dipping his sword into the bowl, and entering into a solemn covenant engagement by oath, one to another, and we would swear by Him that sitteth upon the throne and liveth forever, that we should never sheathe our swords while there was an English soldier in arms remaining in America."

If that spirit animated Baptists in other parts of the world, and especially in England, and in London, under the shadow of the throne, we may well understand the sentiment that inspired in America. Here the struggle of the centuries for liberty was focussing while God was bringing to a climax the subject of freedom, though it was along rough and bloody ways of approach.

It should not be overlooked that while sharing in the crisis of the Revolution as common colonists along with

others, there was a twofold aim that propelled the Baptists. While they earnestly and patriotically craved political freedom, as much as any, this would be only a half-success without the accompaniment of religious liberty. While this will be made to appear further on, when we shall come to lay stress on that most urgent phase, this is the connection in which to give it initial emphasis. The truth is that civil and religious liberty were never intended to be separated. As a double expression of the same idea, they were never intended to lie apart separately but to function in harmony and spirit, separate, yet inseparable. Thus while the able-bodied Baptists took the field for civil liberty, there were those who availed themselves of every advantage afforded in the law-making councils to press parallel the cause of spiritual freedom.

In the rude meetings held in the back country places, in Virginia, were men in uncouth attire whose phraseology shared in their surroundings, but from their spiritual insightedness was derived a force that found expression in their petitions to the legislature that could not be misunderstood. Devoid of the polish of the schools, this country phraseology emitted a radiance that reflected the fervent source from which it came. As one reads those petitions today, he finds them innocent of the niceties of rhetoric, and not infrequently without grammatical construction, but they burn like the fires inside the rough mouth of the crater. With them, the shortest distance between two points was a straight line, hence projectility, directness, is their ruling characteristic. Nor is there to be found jot or tittle of compromise. Where so much was at

stake, and where varied interests were to be served, there might be expected a degree of pruning and trimming in adjustment to a plan harmonious to all. But, no, nothing less than the right thing would satisfy those men of rugged honesty. They staked all on getting all, and not even the largest share. To them principle was indivisible. Compromise of principle, to them, was nothing more nor less than sacrifice of principle. They were called obstinate and mule-headed for not surrendering a point here and there, which would have accrued to them the greatest relative advantage; but they wanted nothing relative in the realm of right, and were content with nothing short of the absolute. They were not obstinate, but consistent. Obstinacy is the inflexibility of pride, consistency is the inflexibility of principle. All that they sought was a compliance with God's will as expressed in his holy word, and nothing less than this appealed to these rough men of the backwoods.

Throughout the colonies there was an outpouring of Baptist men, of every one capable of bearing arms, so that in some instances, churches were reduced entirely in their attendance to old men and women, and small children. Elder McClanahan, of Culpeper county, Virginia, raised a company from among the Baptist churches, of which company he was the captain, and while he would lead them into battle, he would minister to their spiritual wants as chaplain. Howe in his "Virginia Historical Collections," takes occasion to say that "the Baptists were the most strenuous supporters of liberty." The valuable service rendered by our ministry elicited from Washington the remark that "Bap-

tist chaplains were among the most prominent and useful in the army." In South Carolina, where Toryism was the most rampant, during the Revolution, Baptists were especially exposed as victims to their depredations and outrages. Entire families were driven for refuge into the swamps of the Pedee, while others fled to the mountains for safety. Considerable sums of money were offered by Lord Cornwallis for both Oliver Hart, the Charleston pastor, and for Richard Furman, of the High Hills, of South Carolina. Cornwallis is reported to have said that he more feared the prayers of Furman than he did the armies of the Americans. Thomas Jefferson says that when the Revolution began, two-thirds of the inhabitants had become dissenters, who comprised, for the most part, the Presbyterians and the Baptists. While the Presbyterians had a number of eminent ministers, the number of their communicants was small when compared with the membership of the Baptist churches. This furnishes at least an indirect indication of the patriotism of the Baptists of that state. In the same connection, Howison, in his History of Virginia, takes occasion to say concerning the Baptists: "The influence of the denomination was strong among the common people, and was beginning to be felt in high places [at the beginning of the Revolution]. In two points they were distinguished. First, in their love of freedom. No class of the people of America were more devoted advocates of the Revolution; none were more willing to give their money and goods to their country; none more prompt to march to the field of battle, and none more heroic in actual combat, than the Baptists of Virginia. Secondly,

in their hatred of the church Establishment. They hated not its ministers, but its principles." The direct contribution of the Baptists was two-fold—that of their man power, and that of their influence in stirring the patriotism of the yeomanry. Themselves of the common people, they made no contributions of note to men of rank, but that which was done was of greater consequence than any such contributions made directly by themselves. By their undoubted principles, they actuated men of other persuasions to espouse the cause which they devoutly cherished, and in two notable instances, these champions came from the ranks of the Establishment. This was a signal triumph for the Baptists.

X

Creation of American Statesmanship

Without assuming, asserting, or claiming anything, but adhering closely to the historic record, as has been sought all along to be done in these pages, let us give attention to those conditions from which came the elder American statesmen. It will be borne in mind that the legislation of the colonies, in its restricted province inherently and locally, before the Revolution, was largely influenced by the Established churches throughout all the provinces. None excepting members of the Establishment were eligible to office, hence under the thumb of this institution were the bodies of local legislation. Besides, the church being an essential part of the mother government, it cooperated therewith in practical conformity politically. In fact, the church was an important part of the government itself.

As has before been shown, there were certain variations of government in New England, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Connecticut, and the Carolinas, and in all these excepting Pennsylvania, there was reflected in some way, the genius of the government of England. The growth of the English constitution has materially differed from that of the system of any other European state. The constitution is not the outcome of a regular system. Primitive enough in the days of Alfred, the inefficiencies have been gradually filled out by those who know how to work in such way as to bring their own views into evidence, while retaining har-

mony with the work of their predecessors. The construction of the English constitution has been slow, requiring centuries, but every period has contributed its best both of material and labor. England has had the good sense to appropriate all of value that came within reach, whether it savors of autocracy, monarchism, or of republicanism, has welded them into harmony and homogeneity, and all that without evidence of patch-work, or of a system loosely strung together. As it now is, that constitution is a piece of finished symmetry, and is a complete model for a government that still retains its classification among monarchies. Among the elements appropriated is the asset of an influential ecclesiastical system. Once dominant in the circles of the royal court, this is no longer true, nor is the crown itself that which it was. The king has been gradually shorn of his power, till he is scarcely more now than a figurehead. Likewise the church has lost much of its power.

In response to pressure, England had the wisdom to provide for nonconformity, which became easily a system or a part of the government as any other. Ecclesiasticism, taken apart of all else in the American colonies; assumed a variable hauteur of a most offensive and belligerent character, without the least show of adjustment to growing conditions, as was true of the mother country. This was true, whether of the Episcopacy of Virginia and the Carolinas, the Romanism of Maryland, or the Theocracy of New England, the last-named breaking of its own stubbornness and stiffness. These were formidable conditions with which to contend, and as far as was possible, this contention lasted

up to the beginning of the Revolution. That it gave way, and how, in New England, we have already seen, but so long as was possible, the spirit of liberty was withstood at every point in the colonies, till the Revolution induced a change. Though widely differing among themselves, these enemies of popular liberty, whether religious or otherwise, were at one in their opposition to liberty and to the Baptists. Toleration they would grant, in some instances, but never without consideration, as was the case with the Presbyterians in the Valley of Virginia, where they were assigned a region between the hostile Indian tribes and the interior peaceful settlements of the Episcopal churches. This was made a strong plea in the Hanover Remonstrance, when the Presbyterians sought to stave off an encroachment on their rights presumed to have been involved in the bargain made originally, in 1738, with Governor Gooch. From their point of view, the Presbyterians were right in their contention, for it was clearly a bargain between two contracting parties. But because of this protest and contention on the part of the Presbyterians, let us not now, at this late day, call that protest, made in behalf of a local right, and in behalf of a bargain, "a memorial in behalf of religious liberty." This is too jocular a way to deal with a sacred subject.

The same disposition of unethicalness, taken in its widest sense, that can divest one of a divine right, will not scruple to trim and prune even a partial concession made in a bargain, as was attempted to be done with the peaceful Presbyterians in the Virginia Valley. That for which Baptists, and they only, contended, was that

the abridgment of the divine right of liberty, or interference with it at all, fell not within the range of human dictation or legislation. Once transcend the boundary of liberty and make it a matter of bargain or sale, or touch it, in its enjoyment, in any way—once convert it into a matter of gift, or withhold it for any reason, and it is no longer liberty. Call the deflection or departure from this sacred standard what we may, toleration or any other, it is a downright violation of a heavenly principle. This Baptists derived directly from the doctrines of the New Testament; this they insisted on, both in Europe and America; on this they planted their feet as on a globe of granite, and this they promulgated to the world, and in behalf of all the world. Liberty could no more be bought or sold, bargained or bartered, than could any other gift divinely bestowed.

This same freedom of the magnitude and of the philosophic blessedness as taught by Christ, was not discoverable to the human intellect, and was therefore a revelation from heaven. In revealing himself to man, God revealed man to himself. Not least among the divine benedictions was that of man's discovery of himself through the light of revelation. Henceforth liberty became the orthodoxy of universal humanity. Deriving it from this immaculate source, and because it is divine, Baptists have in all zones and in all ages been the prophets and preachers of liberty. The travail of the centuries has been theirs, but they have persistently and consistently conserved freedom, and as its torchbearers they appeared in force, united and concentrated, in the dawn of the Revolution. Inherently and

conscientiously ingrained in them as liberty was, it was not a matter of novelty nor in the slightest degree new in the Revolution, but it was the possibility of obtaining to the full that which is every man's. To none others than to those who kept their ears well to the New Testament, was this principle, now so maimed and distorted by misuse and abuse, so clear.

It should not be overlooked that even our most advanced political spirits had not fully comprehended the meaning of liberty unalloyed, when the Revolution came. Much had been written and said about it, by Locke, Milton, and others, but in its fulness, it was grasped by but few statesmen. The vision of Thomas Jefferson, now recognized as the Apostle of Democracy, was not without obscurity respecting full freedom, when, in 1775, he wrote: "I am sincerely one of those who would rather be in dependence on Great Britain, properly limited, than on any other nation on earth, or than on no nation." But there was a stride in the right direction, at least, when in the same connection he further says: "But I am one of those, too, rather than submit to the rights of legislating for us assumed by the British Parliament, and which late experience has shown they will so cruelly exercise, would lend my hand to sink the whole island in the ocean."[1] Of Jefferson, his biographer says: "He was too thoughtful not to be a reluctant revolutionist, but for the same reason, he was sure to be a determined one."

If our conception of the Baptists be a correct one then they were the only group who had brought to this

[1] Morse, "Thomas Jefferson," series of American Statesmen, p. 27.

critical period a full and unrestricted sense of liberty. They had lived it, taught it, proclaimed it, in season and out of season, and had illustrated it in ways so concrete, that when this turning point came in America, it was recognized by the most thoughtful to be a condition which exactly dovetailed into that which a people, long and unworthily despised, had been teaching from the foundation of American civilization. The principle now received fresh emphasis from the fact that these same people had suffered in behalf of this principle, and it was discovered, too, that so far from being the fanatics which they were thought to be, they were the simple forerunners of a principle now seen to be one indispensable to genuine manliness and Godlikeness.

Unconsciously to many of the thoughtful, a subtle force of influence had gradually exhaled from these people as they became intertwined in the growing populations, whether on Narragansett Bay, the quiet precincts of Philadelphia, on the coast of South Carolina, the interior of North Carolina, the back haunts of Virginia, or elsewhere. To question this, is to deny the force of influence in life, the efficacy of example, and the clear teaching of American history. Through more than a hundred years, these forces were subtly in operation. Not that these Baptists foresaw what was coming, for they did not, but intent alone on duty, they met it even at every peril, while God's aim lay hidden in the earnest and active principle of men which reacted influentially on others. In this way, principles have always planted themselves, and thus new eras are born in the lives of men and of nations.

By this means, the sense of liberty, which has a

sensitive plate in every breast, because divinely placed there in creation, began, and gained headway over our continent. Men speak of circumstances and conditions creating, when these are first created by men. Liberty had the advantage of a receptivity which was already creatively existing, and was waiting for the magnetic and congenial touch in order to leap into life. In this is found the readiness already prepared by liberty, not only for the occasion of the Revolution when the tocsin was then sounded, but for men to grasp the reins of affairs when once an opportune situation was fully presented. Traditional influence is strong, and predilections and precedents hold a powerful sway; but in the subconscious depths the weightier and sublimer things of life find a depositary, and when once these depths are tapped, these powers come forth with force and there are speedily overborne all that is traditional or predilective.

Now in view of all this, whence came the elder statesmen of note when a situation fraught with responsible bigness arose? Is is a mere accident that the leaders who wrought with greatest effect emerged from New England, Philadelphia and Virginia—the strongest vital centers of freedom, where liberty had been promulgated and demonstrated in such way as to become a subtle infection to be communicated to all whom it touched? If there be such thing as accidental coincidence, in view of the fact of such a governance of providence that not even a sparrow falls without the divine knowledge, then these facts may be attributed to accident. But if taken in their logical connection, after assuming that a divine policy was the disclosure of a

continent after so many long ages, and following along a chain of sequences leading to the permanent fixing of liberty on these shores, it would seem that the superficial idea of accident or of mere chance coincidence must give way to that of a recognition of a supervising providence. To deny this might involve not only the divine immanence in all things, but even the divine concern for the most sacred affairs of humanity. It is not necessary that we force a conclusion—only let us soberly, sincerely, and unbiased consider the relation of the ideas suggested, and let each be persuaded in his own mind.

When we recall that when the Revolution came, the Rhode Island Democracy had stood with increasing power and popularity more than a hundred years, and was then in the heyday of its vitality, while the Theocracy, over against which it was built, had gone to pieces of its own unnaturalness, incoherency, and unscripturalness, there is the strongest reason for believing that this same Democracy had attracted to itself more than ordinary attention, and more, that it had exerted an influence, though unconscious in its insinuation into character, to a degree that defies calculation or estimation. That on the thoughtfulness of ambitious young manhood, like that of John and Samuel Adams, James Otis, and Roger Sherman, a flourishing institution of liberty, like the Rhode Island Democracy, which had strengthened through a century, did not reflect, is scarcely thinkable.

We are aware of no allusion at any time made by those distinguished men just named, to the Rhode Island Democracy, nor is that necessary to the confirma-

tion of the influence exerted. That the influence was unrealized even by them is altogether possible, and still be real and positive. Not then on any declaration from any of the group of the early New England statesmen are we to rely for any definite impression made as indicated, but on the fact that they grew up in an atmosphere of liberty begotten by the fabric reared by John Clarke, which remained standing till almost the close of the first half-century of the nineteenth. Attention is called to the fact that none of these men named were descendants of Baptist families. So far as we know, they shared even in the contempt visited on the Baptists. But this would not in the least affect the influence which the Democracy had on their lives or characters. It is pertinent to recall that the ancestry of these same men were among those who esteemed liberty, when it was first urged by the Baptists, as a dangerous dream born of a chimerical temper, but their descendants would not now say so. Not most assuredly would they so say when the colonies were running riot in the same sentiment, which had so long been a principle to the Rhode Island commonwealth, as it had been for ages, to their predecessors.

The sentiment of freedom which came from men like these, and the activity which they displayed in the cause of liberty, showed that they were not strangers to the subject. The thought was enunciated by Bancroft, in a commencement address at Williams College about 1825, on the subject of, "The People in Art, Government and Religion," when he said: "It is alone by infusing great principles into the common mind, that revolutions in society are brought about. . . The

irresistible tendency of the human race is therefore toward advancement, for absolute power has never succeeded and can never in suppressing a single truth. An idea once revealed may find its admission into every living breast, and live there. Like God it becomes immortal and omnipotent. The movement of the species is irresistibly upward. The individual is often lost; Providence never disowns the race. No principle once promulgated has ever been forgotten. . . Wherever moral truth has struck into being, humanity claims and regards the greatest bequest. Each generation gathers together imperishable children of the past, and increases them by new sons of light, alike radiant with immortality."

Turning toward Philadelphia, we have the philosopher-statesman, Benjamin Franklin, than whom there was not among the elder statesmen a more placid spirit, nor one more versatile in practical knowledge. Franklin was a man widely informed, and was more noted for his general scholarship than he was for any special subject. His maternal grandmother was a Baptist, and Franklin, though not a professed Christian, was nevertheless esteemed a good man, and one would judge from the record of his life that he was a Christian. During his career, Philadelphia was the headquarters of the American Baptists. For a hundred and fifty years, Philadelphia was the chief theological source of the Baptists of the country. From its beginning, the City of Brotherly Love had been a center of Quakerism, which is an offshoot from the General Baptists, so that it was a location most congenial to Baptist sentiment, which, conjoined to that

of the Quakers, produced an atmosphere most conducive to liberty. While persecution was the rage in other quarters wherever Baptists and Quakers were, they had none of it at Philadelphia.

It is easy to see how thoroughly saturated Franklin would be with the ennobling sentiment of liberty. It came so naturally and inevitably, as a result of his mother coming from under a parental Baptist roof, coupled with the congeniality of environment at Philadelphia, that it would have been strange had Franklin not been the democratic statesman that he was. In one respect, he was a direct contribution of the Baptists to the ranks of the original statesmen of America.

In Virginia, the situation was altogether different either from New England or Philadelphia. Virginia was a hotbed of high churchism. In towering haughtiness of spirit and contempt of aught else than high churchism, no other part of the continent approached it. Founded in that spirit, it was nursed to a bloated stature that has made the reign of the Establishment one of the most offensive chapters in our early history. In some particulars, Virginia was equaled by New England in its persecutions, while in the variety of methods, and in the display of contumely, it was nowhere approached in the original colonies of America. Here were displayed the worst aspects of the Cavalierism of the reign of Charles II., which to say, is sufficient. In this region were born and reared six of the early statesmen of America—Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Henry, Monroe, and Marshall. More as a jurist, is Marshall known, and while justly ranked

the equal of any jurist of the Saxon race, he was also a statesman. Of the comparative merit of the members of this group it is not necessary to speak, but that so many distinguished contemporaries should have risen with a unanimity so practical, is a tribute to the colony of Virginia.

While up to the outbreak of the Revolution, the Baptists of Virginia were scorned because of their lack of prestige, they had all along been so distinctly conservative of the democratic spirit, that they were known in the interior region of Virginia, where were reared the patriots named. Men of exalted thought as these statesmen were, and men of current affairs, and though about all of them were members of the Established Church, they were observant men, and men susceptible of thoughtful impression, no matter where met. Three of these men were reared in the midst of populous Baptist communities—Jefferson, Madison, and Henry, and it is most natural that the Baptists being of the common people and classed among the unlettered masses, would, by their peculiar tenet of liberty, excite more attention than they otherwise would. Be that as it may, they were so distinct, so outstanding in their pronounced and determined views, that they were brought into sharp contrast, to the most thoughtful mind, with the Establishment in its lofty assumption of superiority and ecclesiastical consequence. Nor could the supercilious bearing of the ministry have escaped the notice of thoughtful men anywhere, while the humble position of the Baptist preachers was also an object of attention.

The causes leading up to the Revolution were so

much in harmony with that with which the Baptists had been all along illustrative, would serve, in a time like that, to enhance public attention respecting their views for which they had been so long opposed and even despised, and equally serve now to bring them and the merits of their doctrines into more special notice. The tradition which has gained currency that Jefferson got his views of a pure democracy from attendance, in boyhood, on a Baptist church, is without historic foundation, and therefore cannot be set down as a fact. At the same time, it is not safe to say that it is not true, for no one can say whether it is or not. There is greater reason for believing that the model of Clarke in Rhode Island was of greater effect than any other illustration then afforded.

But it cannot be safely denied that these men were imbued by the spirit that actuated the Baptists. They were everywhere in Virginia exerting the same energy and diffusing the same influence. The very heartless persecutions which they underwent heightened the prominence of their views. So far as the present writer is concerned, he is of the opinion that this was an element in the divine plan in accomplishing freedom, while laying low the contemptuous Establishment.

Among the men named just above, Marshall was not without some knowledge of the Baptists, his uncle, William Marshall, being one of the foremost Baptist preachers of his time, though the Chief Justice was an Episcopalian. It has been sought to make appear that John Gano secretly baptized Washington, at the request of the first president, in the waters of the Poto-

mac. It is also asserted that this took place in the old First Church, of New York. That this did not occur is indicated by two facts: if Washington believed in immersion, he was not the man who would subscribe to it clandestinely. Stronger still is the fact that there is not a shred of evidence yet afforded that the baptism took place, certainly not in any credible historic way. Here again, it is not safe to say that it is impossible for it to have been, but the preponderance of testimony is thus far against it.

Though reared in the bosom of the Establishment, and though remaining an Episcopalian throughout life, Madison was a pronounced opponent of the ministry of his church, as he was of the views held by them on the subject of liberty. From the beginning of his career as a public servant, and even before, he was most pronounced in his views in favor of the principles held and advocated by the Baptists. Writing to his friend and college mate, Bradford, of Pennsylvania, just after his return from Princeton, where he graduated when quite a young man, Madison says in language more of fiery indignation than of eloquence: "That diabolical, hell-conceived principle of persecution rages among some, and to their eternal infamy be it said the clergy [of the Establishment] can furnish their quota of imps for such purposes. There are at this time, in the adjacent county, not less than five or six well-meaning men in close jail for publishing their religious sentiments, which, in the main, are very orthodox." One in his station could not have expressed his sentimental and sympathetic views with more clearness and emphasis. Throughout the struggle of the

Baptists for soul liberty, Madison was their inflexible friend and champion on the floor of the legislature, and later on the floor of congress. Of this much more will appear in another chapter.

Of the molding influence of the Baptists on this group, since the Baptists were the only ones who were pronounced in their views of freedom, there would seem to be little doubt. Both Jefferson and Madison were pronounced in their views of democratic doctrine as urged by the Baptists, and at the peril of sacrificing social prestige, and of endangering, at different times, their political prospects, they were steadfast in maintaining the views held dear by Baptists. As these men came into a fuller consciousness of freedom, the more earnest did they become in the advocacy of the cause enunciated by the Baptists of Virginia.

XI

The Submission of the National Constitution

It is not generally known, the agitation produced in the thirteen young American states when the constitution was presented to them for ratification or rejection. While it had not been easy to frame the constitution, it was more difficult still to procure its adoption. Since by its adoption the government would be fully launched on its career, there was much popular concern attaching to its adoption. Among the stoutest opponents to its adoption, as it first appeared, were the Baptists of Virginia. Under the able leadership of Rev. John Leland, who had come on the scene during the contest raging round the final overthrow of the Establishment, the Baptists at first resisted the ratification of the constitution. One so formidable, calm, and astute as Leland had shown himself to be, now that he was opposed to the instrument, awoke doubt of its adoption especially since he was backed by the Baptist hosts of the state. Leland had won distinction in the state by his masterly management of the campaign against the Establishment, and his opposition counted for much. With his accustomed acuteness, he detected several serious flaws in the constitution, and shared in the designation applied to it by Patrick Henry, as a "gilded trap." To Henry, the constitution more than hinted at a power that would prevail to the detriment of the people. There was

noticeably absent from the constitution, any provision for free speech and a free press as guardians of the liberties of the people. These Leland craved as positive safeguards of future freedom.

During the long and active campaign against the Establishment, especially in the closing scenes of that struggle, Leland had been thrown much with Madison, between whom and himself had sprung up an intimate friendship. But it now seemed that this intimacy was to be interrupted, since Madison was much in favor of the ratification of the constitution. After a conference between the two leaders, Madison and Leland, we hear no more about Leland's objection to it, but much of his favorableness to its ratification. What took place between these two distinguished men, of course, is not known, but subsequent events would seem to clear up the difficulty, and afford an explanation of what occurred. This will appear as we shall come more directly in connection with the subject in another place. It seems that at the time of the conference between Madison and Leland nothing was said of the election of the delegate who was to represent the district in which lived both Madison and Leland. Somewhat later, while Madison was absent from the state, Leland was besought by his friends to offer for the position of delegate to the convention, to be chosen for the rejection or ratification of the constitution by Virginia. The campaign was well under way, Henry was active with his immense powers of oratory, seeking to defeat the constitution, and it was already evident that he would lead the opposition in the approaching convention. Leland had about consented to run as

a delegate to the convention, when Madison returned, and there was another conference between him and Leland. What again took place finds its explanation in the fact that Leland withdrew fro mthe race, and Madison ran for the position of delegate to the convention. The presumption is that there was an understanding between the two which bore as much on the future, still beyond the convention, when Mr. Madison was to be the agent who would cure the defects complained of by Leland.

At any rate, Madison was elected to the convention, and elected by Baptist votes without which he could not have been. Madison was destined to lead the forces in favor of adoption against Henry, who was to lead the opposition. Nothing was clearer than the new spirit which had now come over the Baptists of the state. Persecution had made them strong, and success had made them bold. No longer a backwoods rabble, as they had been previously regarded, the votes of Baptists were now eagerly solicited by candidates. It imparted animation, without awakening pride. There was a thrill of stimulus altogether natural, and a generous zeal in public affairs correspondent with a deep underlying interest. Without undue sense of consequence there was at the same time a refreshing consciousness of self-respect, and of honest and becoming stimulation now possessing them. They had come into their own, not with a bloated conception of importance, but with that degree of self-esteem that awakens gratefulness, while it impels with alacrity to duty. The war had been won, but the struggle had but begun. On them was still imposed an immense task, in order to

the completion of that undertaken, but with a spirit now quite different from that which before possessed them, they addressed themselves thereto.

Rev. John Leland, a Baptist, and more, a Baptist preacher, had become a dominant factor in the life of Virginia. Conditions were fast reversing. The once lofty and vain clergy of the Establishment had now become not a little sycophantic. Their pride had given way to enforced humility. The elevated port was gone, and a strange attempt at cordiality had come. While buoyant, though not crowing over their promotion to notice and respectability, and exhilarated by a sense of satisfaction, the Baptists were now serene, the clergy, in their ill-gotten homes, were quaking, not knowing what would next befall them. They hoped for the best while they feared the worst. They knew better than any others the unlimited source of energy and unconquerable spirit of the people over whom they had previously ridden, booted and spurred, and they were now ready to make any terms short of those that might lead to their own destruction. But the end was not yet. Adversity was now returning laden with spoils. Chickens were coming home to roost.

As has been said, the campaign ended in Virginia, with Madison and Henry as opposing protagonists on the question of the rejection or the ratification of the constitution. Each party was equally confident. Public interest followed an exciting campaign to the floor of the convention. To the glance of the casual observer, it appeared that the opposition to ratification was predominant. On the other side, hope of success centered in the little pale-faced delegate from Orange

county—self-poised, collected, and with a consciousness of power written on his face—James Madison. The delegates had met an hour before the convention was called. In knots and groups they stood in excited conversation about the room. In the excited group was conspicuous the idol-orator of Virginia, Patrick Henry. His angular form, somewhat indifferent garb, short, straggling hair lying unkempt about his head, face attractive only for its classic mold, features somewhat drawn in response to an inward enthusiasm, and a hawklike eye that shot its dazzle here and there, Patrick Henry was, of all men then living in Virginia, the one most dreaded.

The excitement of the scene was heightened by the doubtfulness of the issue, a doubt not confined alone to the possible action of Virginia, but one concerning the general result. Eight states had already ratified the constitution, some barely, some reluctantly, others with reservations. Nine states were necessary in order to ratification. New York, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Rhode Island, and Virginia, were yet to act. All were supposed to be against ratification. Everything now pointed to the rejection of the much-mooted instrument. Just one other state was needed for its ratification by the nation, and that was not now within sight. In the convention hall of Virginia, were a hundred and eighty-six delegates. Representing the lead of the opposition were Patrick Henry, Richard Henry Lee, James Monroe, William Grayson, and George Mason—a quintet of commanding ability. Of the assembled greatness of Virginia, Governor Randolph alone, supported Madison. John Marshall was present,

but was non-committal. He later reinforced Madison. In later years John Marshall was to become the chief justice of the United States, and in those after-years, he interpreted the constitution, and gave it its permanent setting. In a genuine sense, John Marshall was therefore the father of the constitution. In this convention of hot debate of more than a month, he got a valuable insight into its merits of the great instrument.

The contest on the floor of the Virginia convention was a memorable one. Patrick Henry reveled in his choice element—the rough-and-tumble of hot debate. His oratory was pyrotechnic and cyclonic, but after it had simmered to coolness, there was but little left for listeners to retain. Madison was calm, centered, and resourceful, and was a mere conversational talker, rather than speaker. In a quiet, measured way, he spoke with serene seriousness, building his argument with compactness, and underpinning it with reasons, which to disregard was to do violence to one's sober conviction. Two antagonists in stormy debate were never more unlike than Henry and Madison—the one reliant on torrential eloquence, the other on logic unadorned, and on reason that shone in steady radiance. Madison won.

For some time, and in some quarters even now, the belief was that Virginia had turned the scales, but in that day of slow communication of news, it was not learned till long afterward, that New Hampshire had ratified the constitution four days before Virginia, having acted on June 21, while the Virginia ratification took place on June 25. Many years later, the fact of

the precedence of New Hampshire had remained so unemphasized, that Senator John S. Barbour, of Virginia, knowing that Leland had been chiefly instrumental in the election of Madison to the convention, to whom he had generously given way, and who won the ratification, was led to say: "The credit of adopting the constitution of the United States, properly belongs to a Baptist clergyman, formerly of Virginia, named Leland. If Madison had not been in the Virginia convention, the constitution would not have been ratified, and as the approval of nine states was necessary to give effect to this instrument, and as Virginia was the ninth state, if it had been rejected by her, the constitution would have failed (the remaining states following her example), and it was through Elder Leland's influence that Mr. Madison was elected to that convention. It is unquestionable that Mr. Madison through the efforts and resignation of John Leland was elected, and it is all but certain that that act gave to our country its famous constitution."

However, the ultimate aim of neither Leland nor Madison was that of the ratification of the constitution. As has been seen, Leland opposed it, at first, for the same reasons given by Patrick Henry, but if ratified by the people, Madison saw an opportunity of curing its defects, and doubtless it was this which controlled Leland in his change of view, and which led him to the support of Madison. The ratification was only a stepping-stone to something else. That became apparent some time later, when again Leland was urged to run for congress, but he again declined in

favor of Madison, and by reason of his influence, procured the election of Mr. Madison by means of the overwhelming Baptist vote. The result of the election of Madison to congress, by the vote of the Baptists, was the adoption of the first amendment to the constitution, whereby free speech, a free press, and right of free assemblage of the people, were procured. The first amendment to the constitution, with its inestimable privileges is, then, a distinct contribution of the Baptists to the nation.

We are now able to understand all that had previously taken place in the confidential intercourse between Madison and Leland. While Madison was honestly ambitious for distinction, he was conscientiously so. Leland was in position to use to advantage both the man and his conscientious aspiration. On a former occasion, Madison had suffered defeat in a contest for office, because he declined to yield to the demand of the time to "treat" voters in the barrooms. If Madison was ambitious, it was both an honest and an honorable ambition. With a sense of profound seriousness, Leland was intent on procuring a clear way to full liberty for all the people.

By the first amendment of the constitution, the last chink of the possibility of religious favoritism in America, was effectually stopped up. The press was free, so was popular speech. The people could now assemble at will, in the full exercise of freedom of speech, and the right of petition, even to the humblest was established. So far as fundamental law was con-

cerned, these questions were forever settled in the United States of America.

Into solid, substantial democratic life, the Baptists had now entered, as instruments in the divine hand, to give substantial expression by practical life, to the symmetrical completion of American institutions.

XII

Complete Disunion of Church and State

From Constantine, nothing had become more prevalent, and apparently fixed in human affairs, than the union of the church with the civil government. Prevalent though it was, it was the chief bane of the ages. Its unnaturalness and utter incompatibility with harmony, made it a curse to the race. The same group the path of which we have sought to follow in these pages, encountered at every step of the way, this supreme and unscriptural difficulty. So long as the church and the state remained in close bonds of affinity, there could be no such thing as religious liberty.

In Virginia, this was the most vexatious of all the phases of the struggle engaged in by the Baptists. From the beginning, they were beset by supreme difficulty. Their social position and poverty, to say nothing of their illiteracy, all of which won for them general contempt, placed them at immense disadvantage.

The Baptists had on their side only conscience, faith, and God, while everything of a visible nature stood opposed to them. The only people who espoused the cause of thorough separation of church and state, they were the lowliest, and by all others esteemed the meanest in social and intellectual life. While in contention for their individual rights, civilly and religiously, their contention was so broad and comprehensive that it included the rights of all men. Closer to them, in point

of sentiment, were the Quakers and the Presbyterians, but the Quakers were averse to contention, while the Presbyterians were easily content with the meager pittance accorded by toleration, and we have seen what toleration, in its essence, is. This left the Baptists alone with God, to overset the now popular idea of the union of church and state. It was the arrayal of the weak against the strong—of aristocracy against downright backwoodsism.

Too many ins and outs, ups and downs, enter into the long contest to be recalled here. Nor is it necessary that these be gone into further than to gain a sufficient scope of the tragic struggle to enable us to present the gist of the principle involved. From the first, after coming to themselves in the possession of denominational consciousness, the Baptists set their hearts on overturning the Establishment. This idea coming on by degrees, rapidly grew into a fixed determination, encouraged by their bits of success, the growing discomfiture of the Episcopalians, and the vivid possibilities opened by the Revolution. The purpose of uprooting the Establishment seems not fully to have possessed the Baptists, at first, but once fixed in their hearts, they became irresistible.

Taking advantage of the conditions of the times, they gained a solid footing during the Revolution, but this was only a scrap of that which they came devoutly to desire, and which they resolutely sought.

The consuming idea then came to be to cleave asunder and thoroughly, church and state. If anything ever appeared humanly impossible, it was this task set by the Baptists to themselves. But it was right,

and that was enough for those rugged men of the backwoods to know. Yet the juncture was a critical one—the task titanic. How it might eventuate was by no means clear, but that the system was wrong, and that it barred the way to liberty, in its real sense, was sufficient to inspire a beginning, with reliance on bits of successive victory to open up possibilities along the way.

The Baptists would have hailed with delight any allies in the struggle, but none came. The Hanover Remonstrance, made by the Presbyterians, so far from contributing to the cause of downright religious liberty, which question was involved in the disunion of the civil and religious governments, rather than otherwise contributed to the retention of the union of the secular and sacred forces. Toleration was what the Baptists did not want, yet it was all that the Hanover Presbytery craved. No more advanced ground taken than this, did no good, while an influential denomination like that of the Presbyterians, taking this ground and going no further, expressing entire satisfaction with toleration, actually gave a backset to the movement.

The struggle against the Establishment was expressed in three phases. One of these was originally that of a general onslaught against the Establishment, and against its assumption of all churchly rights. In this initial contest the clergy of the Establishment were as arrogant in their assumption, as were the Baptists determined in their insistence. The Baptists were the victors in this first onslaught, a slight breach was made in the Establishment, but the success was more

effectual in its moral aspect, than it was materially. It discouraged the Establishment clergy, and equally enboldened the Baptists. But this was only a preliminary victory. The ministry of the Baptists came to be recognized for the first time, by the government of Virginia. In this opening contest, the Baptists led in a single-handed fight, since in the retention of the pigmy privileges of toleration, the Presbyterians were content.

The next distinct aspect of the struggle against the Establishment, was that which gathered about the effort to fix a plan of general assessment for all denominations irrespectively, whereby the public woul be taxed for the support of religion. In the first struggle, the Establishment which had so long subsisted at the expense of the public treasury, was now shaken loose from that advantage, and was now precipitating a new issue whereby all denominations would share in that in which before only the Establishment partook. This should have been very humiliating to an institution so arrogant, but in an extremity which gave promise of utter deprivation of the public funds, the clergy would now make the assessment general, and without discrimination. Financially, this would have been a considerable gain to the Baptists in their poverty, but it was wrong in principle, unjust to the public, and above all else, was unscriptural, and was therefore repudiated by them. Besides, still, it meant the continued relation of church and state, and by this broad principle Baptists were guided in their opposition. The position here taken by the respective sides was, in every way, interesting. The well-fed and well-

clothed clergy of the Establishment were clamoring for a resetting of the public table at the expense of their dignity, and the rough-clad and poor men of the Baptist ranks withstanding them, though the offer of equal advantage with all others was made. Here arrogance gave place to supplication. The fastidious gentry of the clergy of the Establishment who before would not disdain to notice the common people, as they would pass them in their coaches along the roads, were now actually seeking to fraternize even Baptist preachers. More than this, these tenderly-nursed dependents on the public treasury, now forsook their carriages, and going in quest of the names of petitioners to their application to the legislature, wended their way afoot along paths in the woods and across fields, and found their way into humble cabins, with the plea pityingly presented to all alike to provide a means, at the public expense, for the support of the preaching of the gospel. The strongest plea made by these men, in their petition to the law-making power, in behalf of a continued means of support by the government was, that by their training, they were disqualified for any other service than that of the sacred ministry. Yet the fact was a notorious one, that their diversions had been, for the most part, found around the card and wine table, and in the chase over the hills. This was the ridiculous phase presented in this second stage of the contest.

In the struggle involved in the second aspect, the Baptists were again alone. At first, the Presbyterians opposed a general assessment for a universal and indiscriminate supply of the gospel to the public, but

later they wavered, meanwhile asking the government for four hundred acres of land for the support of their school, Hampden-Sidney College. They got the land asked for, then favored the general plan of assessment, thereby incurring the denunciation of Jefferson and Madison, in which Jefferson disguised his indignation in general terms, while Madison called them by name.[1]

It seems that the ministry of the Presbyterian church was responsible for the encouragement given to the plan of the general assessment, while the laity of the church opposed it. At any rate, the Presbyterians again shifted their ground, and returned to the support of the Baptists in their opposition to the Establishment, in its supplanting, and thenceforth remained loyal. It was not, however, till the last phase of the struggle was entered on, that the Presbyterians were steadfast and loyal in the support of the Baptists. Nor was service more welcomed. The Baptists stood in need of all the aid that could be had, hence that of the Presbyterians was timely and was appreciated.

The struggle over the general assessment was fierce and long. The clergy of the Establishment availed themselves of all possible tactics of persuasion, promise, and inducement to retain a grip on the general treasury for support, but the Baptists led by their ablest men, and supported throughout by Jefferson and Madison, and finally by the Presbyterians, in the end prevailed.

But the snake was only scotched, not killed. Much yet remained to be done. The comfortable homes built for the Establishment clergy, and the lands, called

[1] Rives, "Life and Times of Madison," Vol. 1, p. 630.

"glebe lands," both bought at public expense and by direct taxation, were still in their possession. So long as this was true, there would remain a discrimination in favor of the Establishment, and the influence of a precedent that would bode no good. To the confiscation of these lands and clerical homes, the Baptists now addressed themselves. What they sought was the sale of this property, the proceeds of which were to go to the public treasury. This brought another struggle, the fierceness of which, if possible, exceeded that of the two others. Baptists and Presbyterians were now together in this last struggle. The fight raged with fierceness, as the clergy saw the last hope of their continued prerogatives fading. Never was clerical politics fiercer or worse, on the side of the Establishment, and never did it avail so little. The pressure of the times was now against the Establishment, or so much of it as was left, and the result was, that finally a law was enacted in 1799 to confiscate the lands and homes of the church, and with this action passed forever the union of church and state in the American Union.[1] The United States now started on the anomalous career of a nation without an Established church.

While to all appearances, this would seem to end the difficulties, the country having achieved its independence, and absolute freedom, civil and religious pro-

[1] For many years after the Revolution these Episcopal meeting houses were standing in a run-down condition throughout Virginia, and the premises of the former homes of the clergy were overgrown with tangled vines and riotous weeds, while the residences were falling into decay.

vided for, yet all was yet only theoretical, and the stern test of the practical was yet to come. It might have seemed that the Baptists had done about all that could be effected, but there was yet work to be done, and it is doubtful that any preceding tasks surpassed in importance that which was done in the service rendered in rescuing the nation in a season of dire peril.

XIII

A Nation Saved by a Religious Revival.

John Fiske has written a most illuminating work on "The Critical Period of American History," in which he shows the peril which faced the young nation during the five years following the peace of 1783. While no attempt will here be made to reproduce the causes which led to that terrible era in our history, there are one or two principles that may be named, in passing, in order to bring the situation somewhat before us.

All wars are followed by demoralization. This is inevitable because of that which enters into war. With respect to the Revolution, there were conditions of a most peculiar character which rendered the situation exceedingly bad. In the first place, in the outbreak of the war, the population of the colonies was strung along the Atlantic in straggling settlements more than a thousand miles, with no coherency, no comity of sentiment, save that of a general sense of local patriotism, which was shown in the prosecution of the war. Many of these communities were ruined by the Revolution, homes were destroyed, fields laid waste, the people were scattered, and there was nothing left but a state of wild demoralization. The government existed more in theory than in fact. It was existing more on paper than in practice. It was the laughing stock of the nations. The people had freedom, but it was turned into license. Our statesmen, unused to govern-

mental affairs, were appalled at the situation. The soldiers had returned unpaid, unfed, and ragged, and had come back to a scene of ruin, and in many instances, their families had been dispersed here and there over the country, the fields had grown up in tall weeds and stunted growth, and only desolation was left to tell the story of once quiet homes.

While all of this was true on the lower rounds of life, in the higher circles, if possible, it was worse. There was utter stagnation everywhere, and the people began to murmur because they had been brought into straits like these. There was not a little talk of establishing an American monarchy, so disgusted were they with a sham democracy, which to them was nothing more than chaos.[1] All cherished dreams and hopes had turned to ashes, and demoralization was supreme. None were more concerned than the Baptists who had risked all in the struggle, and seemingly were about to lose all. In their extremity, they resolved to call on the Lord.

Among the chief difficulties encountered was that of intercommunication among the people in their dislocated condition. There were no mails, no railroads, no telegraphs, no printing presses, and even had there been, there was a bequest of ignorance from the war of seven years, and the people could not have availed themselves of these advantages, even though they had them.

In this dire dilemma, some of the old country preachers got together in Virginia, talked over the possi-

[1] Robert Ellis Thompson, "The Hand of God in American History," p. 64.

bility of losing all for which they had struggled and endured, and it was resolved to take the matter to God, and in their distress call on him for guidance and relief. Accordingly, prayer meetings were begun in the rural churches of Virginia, up on the James river, requests were sent from neighborhood to neighborhood, calling on the people to gather together day after day, and plead for light, and redemption from calamity. It became an era of prayer. The spirit of prayer was borne from one settlement to another, it rose into exhortation, humble homes and the adjacent woods, and the little churches of poles and logs became vibrant with a devotion scarcely before known, and this went on without cessation.

Attracted by rumors of the wonderful effects of the meetings held everywhere, those of the higher stations of society would be drawn to these places from sheer curiosity, would feel the power of the Spirit who saturated the atmosphere with his presence, and so soon as they would come on the ground hundreds of all classes would be smitten, and pass into the kingdom. Preaching of a startling character was indulged in, terror seized on the people, the influence swelled far out, and finally came to affect the population throughout the country, especially in the states of the South, and certainly as far north as Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Such is what is known in our history as The Second Awakening. Our secular historians give it scarcely a passing notice, while others fail altogether to mention it, yet it resulted in the accomplishment of more than was conceived in the ingenuity of men for re-

lieving a situation well nigh chaotic. Like the first Great Awakening, this one started in a most insignificant way, but it spread far more widely, was attended by more demonstrations of power, and throughout, was without a great leader, as was the first.

The change wrought in Virginia was remarkable. Where a few years before men and women had been pelted from hiding places with missiles, they were now sought as guides to salvation. Those attending on the meetings were instrumental in inducing others to attend. All else was for a time lost sight of but worship. The most notorious among men for vice and crime often became the most insistent of exhorters, and would go forth here and there the proclaimers of the truth. While not devoid of the element of love, the preaching largely took the form of the denunciation of wrong, and the legal features of the gospel were foremost. Wrong-doing hid its head, communities were relieved of crime, and an inexpressible soberness and seriousness seized on the people everywhere.

Out over the land the revival spread like a fire eating its way through dry grass. Everywhere it assumed the same form—men most blatant and defiant before, called on the Lord. To many accustomed to printed form of prayer, these were no longer needed—they found satisfaction alone in the most outright and direct appeal of telling Jesus exactly what they wished. Frozen formality and congealed ceremony reacted in amazing rebound of naturalness, and was the more easily shattered because of its dryness and deadness.

Beginning as a zephyr, the revival swelled into a

storm. Preaching such as was heard, thundered, and rove asunder the strongholds of evil as rarely before. Into strange blend came the law and the gospel, the one cleaving with violence, the other healing and soothing with love. Great as were the demonstrations of the Whitefield revival, they were tame in comparison with those of the Second Awakening. Profanity gave place to praise and love for God and for man, and order took the place of lawlessness. Society fell into due order. Ways before unfound and before unthought of in dissolution of perplexing and entangling questions, now opened like highways through thick forests. Rescue was found in ruin. Yea, the people were saved, the nation was saved.

Deemed unworthy of mention usually by historians, who merely find other ways of showing how the change was wrought in the young American states, and how the difficulties besetting the nation in the most critical period of its history were met and solved, it was nevertheless in these rugged forms and methods which sought expression in the religion of Jesus Christ. To read the history of that far-off time now, in the light of the Second Awakening, the fact becomes as clear as are the descriptions of the battles of King's Mountain and Yorktown. Behind the resuscitation of national life and the rehabilitation of national form with its courts and congresses and treaties, lay the power of the Second Awakening. Easy enough became the tasks of the elder statesmen, when the population became elastic under a power that was not of men.

For more than twenty years, the revival held on its way. It swept the nation. In its power it accom-

panied the migrations far up beyond the Ohio river on the north, and when that intrepid pioneer-evangel, Stephen Gano, crossed the Ohio river, in 1790, not far from the present site of Cincinnati, he found in that region a body of men and women, who, in savage surroundings, had "set up a meeting among themselves, which they conducted in turn."[1] Beyond the Mississippi, into Arkansas and Missouri, the tide was borne by early spiritual pioneers, who with compasses sought out the way through the dense forests, while with hatchets they blazed the way for others who might come after them.

The seeds of this revival were carried by emigrants toward the distant and unknown southwest, as they literally hacked their way through the woods as they went toward a new country, never forgetting at night to group about their campfires and join in song and prayer and exhortation, filling the woods with strange sounds never before heard in these primeval haunts. In those early years of the last century, under the inspiration of this wonderful revival, were sown the seeds from which sprang some of the churches now full of zeal and of good works, far out across the plains that stretch toward the setting sun.

A moral force like this great revival, it is impossible to measure either in its scope of influence, or in the penetration or extension of its power. How many vital forces were touched into being and controlled thereafter, and how deep into the future that revival reached, cannot be known. But as a timely contribu-

[1] Justin A. Smith, "A History of the Baptists in the Western States East of the Mississippi," pp. 26-7.

tion to American life in a season of peril and need, its value is at least equal to that of any other, whether made in blood, in sagacious statesmanship, or in treasure. The spiritual forces created by the Second Awakening, as contributions to the future needs of the nation and of the world, can never be known. It touched American society to the core, and immediately coming from it were famous evangelists like James McGready and William McGee, of the Presbyterian church, and the incomparable Peter Cartwright and John McGee, of the Methodists, all of whom became flaring tongues of fire long before its close. To name men of might like these, and many others there are, whose names might be called, is but barely to hint at some of the gracious results of the Great Awakening. It came with resistless force across the century line, and did not spend its active and visible force till far within the nineteenth century.

The reports of the effect of the Great Awakening, especially in the west roused so much interest in the eastern part of the United States, that much inquiry was made of the accuracy of the strange accounts at the time given. Dr. Archibald Alexander, of Princeton, on hearing the startling reports of the spiritual effects of the meetings in Kentucky, and elsewhere in the middle west, wrote to Dr. George A. Baxter, another distinguished Presbyterian minister, to learn the accuracy of the rumors. Dr. Baxter, who made an early visit to the scenes of the revival, wrote to Dr. Alexander on this wise: "On my way I was informed by settlers on the road that the character of Kentucky

travelers was entirely changed, and that they were as remarkable for sobriety as they had formerly been for dissoluteness and immorality. And indeed I found Kentucky to appearances the most moral place I had ever seen. A profane expression was hardly ever heard. A religious awe seemed to pervade the country. Upon the whole, I think the revival in Kentucky the most extraordinary that has ever visited the church of Christ; and all things considered, it was peculiarly adapted to the circumstances of the country into which it came. Infidelity was triumphant and religion was on the point of expiring. Something extraordinary seemed necessary to arrest the attention of the giddy people who were ready to conclude that Christianity was a fable and futurity a delusion. This revival has done it. It has confounded infidelity, and has brought numbers beyond calculation under serious impressions."

In a sermon preached, in 1803, to the Presbyterian Synod of Kentucky, Dr. David Rice,[1] a leading minister of the Presbyterians, of Virginia, bore testimony to the wonders wrought by the great revival. In the sermon alluded to, Dr. Rice says: "Neighborhoods noted for their vicious and profligate manners are now as much noted for their piety and good order. Drunkards, profane swearers, liars, quarrelsome persons, and others, are remarkably reformed. * * * A number of families who had lived apparently without the fear of God, in folly and in vice, without any religious instruction or any proper government, are now reduced to

[1] Dr. Rice's tomb is to be seen today in an old graveyard at Danville, Kentucky, not far from Center College.

order and are daily joining in the worship of God, reading his word, singing his praises, and offering up supplications to a throne of grace. Parents who seemed formerly to have no regard for the salvation of their children, are now anxiously concerned for their salvation, are pleading for them, and are endeavoring to lead them to trust Christ, and train them up in the way of piety and virtue." Testimony of this character is copious from numerous sources, even the secular histories of the time giving full accounts of these extraordinary demonstrations. Nor is it too much to say that this mighty spiritual groundswell saved the nation in the most critical juncture of its history.

"From this movement sprang, as by magic, nearly all the great national religious institutions of today."[1] Not only was the country saved from a collapse, but all religious bodies were enriched and enlarged by the stupendous impulse given to religious thought and activity by this revival. Beginning with the prayer-meetings in the country churches of the Baptists on James river, in supplication to God as the sole source of help after all else had failed, the leading characteristic of the movement, so far as doctrines were concerned, was the sovereignty of God. In many ways the national acknowledgment of this doctrine afterward sought expression, one among many of which was the inscription on our coins of—"In God we trust." Human extremity

[1] Rev. James Brand, DD., in an address on "Christian Evangelism as one of the Working Forces in American Christianity," "The World's Parliament of Religions," Vol. II., p. 984.

and divine opportunity met in the deliverance into full-panoplied nationality of the Great American Democracy. A secret providence guided the humble actors in this episode of our early national history, till their little plans came to encompass the construction of a nation on the basis of divine principles.

XIV

Peculiar Relation of Baptists to the Present World-Juncture.

In this closing section of a wide but cursory survey of history, in which has been sought to be gleaned the conspicuous facts connected with the work and career of a people, who have been singularly steadfast in seeking to cling to the form of sound words embodied in divine revelation, there is a temptation to follow the logical sequences in their successive stages of history even to the present. But this would be disproportionate to the task originally assumed in this little volume, as is indicated by its title. To study the nation in its building, and to seek to discover the vital forces of cement and illumination in that construction, was the chief purpose, and the deductions may be easily made, as one may follow further the development of Baptist history. Among the many incidental changes wrought by Baptist influence and polity might be named the gradual mold toward democracy of other bodies of Christians, the drift of at least some of which is in the direction of a democratic standard. It is a matter of common observation that the impact of Baptist force everywhere has conduced to democratic tendencies, a change which can be due to one source alone, since Baptists have tenaciously clung to the democratic idea in all the centuries, while those who now applaud them, have gradually veered toward them, from standards once at variance with them.

Says an eminent Presbyterian author and theolgian: "The kingdom of God is the most democratic institution and society in the world, in which there is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free, rich nor poor, but all are one in Christ Jesus, and are kings and priests unto God. Much more then will the city of God be a democracy in which all will share in equal justice and in common rights and privileges."[1]

Least of all, however, is there occasion of boasting of the achievements of Baptists. There may be gratefulness, and in abundance, but it should be a sense of gratefulness sobered by a consciousness of tremendous responsibility which is the rather enhanced than diminished after all these years of history. If that undertaken in the present work to be proved, is even approximately accurate in the conclusion, then Baptists at this time face a task, the responsibility of which is beyond the limit of measure. If Baptists were appointed, as the author sincerely believes they were, to kindle the first fires of freedom on these shores, and if in the extremity of poverty, and often of illiteracy, they kept these fires replenished by a devotion to principle that was granite in firmness, and as unvarying and consistent as gravity, what must be our present task, when with advantages practically illimitable, we stand before the door of the world opening on a globe-domain in clamorous need of just that which Baptists can give? America has won the war, now America must win the world for Christ.

[1] Snowden, "Can we believe in Immortality?" p. 210. Dr. Snowden is Professor of Systematic Theology in the Western Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Since in the providence of God, Baptists have led as torch-bearers the way to the civil and religious redemption of America, is it not at least reasonable to suppose that they must now keep step with these times that move with stunning rapidity to a sublimer goal for the great family of humanity? We are no longer an illiterate people, nor one of poverty, but are opulent in all the resources now in demand by a tumbled-down world. God has enriched Baptists in material substance, not for the keeping, but for the giving. The whole teaching of Jesus is directly against the tendency to make wealth an end in itself. It is equally a principle in political economy and of divine revelation that it is not so much the production of wealth as its distribution that induces regulation in the affairs of the world.

It is at least a noteworthy fact that in most of the parables of the Master, and in his main teachings, he deals so largely with the question of money—its use and misuse. Money is one of the aptest tests of character. That which one does or does not with his possessions, how he uses his riches, be they much or little, affords a truer practical index of character, than is afforded by any other element that enters into life. More than anything else, wealth comes into contention with God for the throne of the heart and character. It is God's principal rival. Nothing within the range of the temporal gifts of men may be turned to greater practical account, either for good or for evil, in the enrichment or shrinkage of character, than money. Nor is there any thing within one's possession that can contribute nearly so much to the elevation or depres-

sion of character in others. Character is the symbol of all that is good or bad in the world. In contributing to the establishment, enlargement, and increased efficiency of literary institutions, hospitals, sanitaria, and the evangelization of the world, one does not give to these as such, but for the promotion of character.

But it takes character to make character. One's dollars directed toward the glory of God, as verily bear the impress of his character, as do the imprint on the bills indicate their valuation, or the superscription on the coins. Going forth on a mission of character, they make character—prop it where it is weak, whether physical or moral, all of which evenuates in the divine glory. Always, however, the gifts of a good man or a good woman are reflecting the character of the giver. The giver stamps the gift and the intention defines the giver. Investments in all sacred causes are investments in character and emanate from character. Only what is wrought into our character during life, can we take away with us. The character of every one is strengthened by his acts, and no character can be eventually injured but by one's acts. One's character is like a fence—it cannot be strengthened by whitewash.

By the sturdy character of those who have gone before we have come into a rich heritage. . Proportionately to this heritage, is the vastness of the opportunity which God now presents in a world shaken to pieces in order to a new construction on an old and sacred basis. The world today groans in travail for the practical operation of those principles which the Son of God sowed far into the future for the glory of human-

ity. We are summoned as men and women have never before been, simply because the world has reached that pitch of need which it never before experienced, and for which it now prepared. If the estimate of Baptists expressed in the preceding pages of this little book, be a correct one, then there is no possible escape from the duty now providentially imposed, to proceed in the execution of the work, as did those before us. Commensurate with their slim advantages and resources, a continent was assigned the fathers, into which to plant the seeds of liberty and to gather the initial harvests, while to us with immeasurable resources, is thrown open the world. "To whom much is given will much be required." If those who went before wrought so well and achieved so much for a continent, the duty is unavoidable to us to work correspondingly for the world, both that about us, and to its furthest confines.

No opportunity and privilege in all the past, even remotely approaches that of the present. All that has gone before, the rich heritage transmitted through the centuries, the radiant examples of devotion, are the propelling forces now, while the infinite reaches of the future are our inspiration. God enables us thus to see the present situation.

In a final statement of this somewhat extended review, let it be said that, in all the centuries, Baptists have unremittingly striven for liberty—democratic freedom. As a general distinction, this has been their most outstanding trait. The struggle of the ages was fully joined in the last great war. In this unprecedented conflict met the world forces of Democracy and Despotism. The triumph of Democracy makes pos-

sible a free world. Democracy now vibrates on the air of the world as did imperious Despotism before the titanic struggle began. While on all Americans is now imposed the obligation to unite in setting the seal of universal liberty on a distracted world, it is especially an incumbent task now set to the hands and hearts of Baptists, and especially of the Baptists of free America. The liberty and exceptional contour given a great nation under conditions so adverse, is, within itself, a pledge of the possibility of freeing the world when conditions without limit, conspire. At all times, Baptists have been the diligent seed-sowers of freedom—individual, civil, and religious, and in a period so tremendous and momentous, they cannot now fail, and retain their relation, so long held, with God. If ever there was a time when Baptists should prove themselves mighty men of valor, it is—NOW.

We have come to a mementous period—a juncture of eras in the world's history. Problems weigh on the spirits of the wisest and best men like the burden of the Lord on the prophets of old. Humanity is taxed to the utmost. There is no possibility of world-reconstruction but that of practical conformity to the fundamental principles of Jesus into the hands of whom all authority is lodged. Speak of trimming, pruning, and compromising in a time like this? Why it is just that general world policy, pursued in the past, that has brought us to our present wrecked condition. If there be any policy that should now be shunned, it is that of avoiding the errors of the ages in an effort to cohere and amalgamate on an unscriptural basis. With so much won by Baptists at a cost so fearful, nothing

could be more fatuous than to give up all now when more than ever before New Testament principles need to be inculcated and firmly urged on the attention and conscience of the world.

To the conquest of the world, the intrepid Paul, Peter, and John went forth when the dawn was just breaking in the Eastern sky. With nothing to inspire but the divine Commission, nothing to embolden but a granite faith, they faced a world of odds overwhelming. No material resources were theirs; they met opposition at every step; no sympathy encouraged them—they were lured alone by the promise of Him to be with them to the end.

As applied to us in the noonday splendor of our age, is the obligation to press this supreme issue lessened? Is it not the rather enhanced by the juncture of conditions into which we are brought? Is not steadfastness in the faith and boldness of adventure to achieve in the name of the Most High the more emphasized because of the inviting advantages now afforded?

The pressure of a phenomenal age is now on us. Its significance is not to be sought on the chess-board of politicians, but in the ringing command of the Master, old, but ever new: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world. Amen."

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